



## Basic Texts of Islamic Mysticism



# Basic Texts of Islamic Mysticism

*Editor*

Bernd Radtke

VOLUME 1

# Pure Gold from the Words of Sayyidī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dabbāgh

*(Al-Dhabab al-Ibrīz min Kalām  
Sayyidī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz al-Dabbāgh)*

*By*

Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak al-Lamaṭī

*A Translation with Notes and an Outline by*

John O’Kane and Bernd Radtke



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*In memoriam*  
*Richard Gramlich*



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## PREFACE

As has been the case with other of our scholarly undertakings, the origin of this book goes back to Bergen in Norway where Bernd Radtke became acquainted with the literature and the world of ideas associated with more recent Sufism. Back then, at the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, he read some passages of the *Ibrīz* in a desultory manner in a printed edition and acquired a first general impression of its contents. Only in Beirut in 1993 did he come across the new improved edition of the *Ibrīz*—which provides the basis for the present translation—and then set about reading the work more systematically.

The result of his reading was a series of four articles,<sup>1</sup> along with the decision eventually to make the work's contents accessible to a larger public in an English translation. But how was this ambition to be realized? First John O'Kane had to be won over for the task and this was not particularly easy. John had an instinctive sense of the difficulties such a task would entail and was at the time committed to a number of other projects. To begin with, and by way of gauging the demands of producing a full translation, he set himself to translating the introductory chapter of the *Ibrīz* that presents al-Dabbāgh's *vita*. But at that stage the project had to be put on hold—we were both engaged in other commitments. John undertook a translation of the *Manāqib al-ʿarīfīn* of Aflākī, Bernd Radtke was busy with the alleged autochthonous Islamic enlightenment as well as preparation of the nomenclature for an *Encyclopaedia of Islamic Mysticism*. Likewise, during this period we cooperated to produce an English translation of Hellmut Ritter's *Meer der Seele* that especially put demands on John.

Then in the spring of 2003 Bernd plucked up his courage and began a German translation of Chapters One to Twelve which he finished by the end of January 2004. The German translation provided a most valuable basis to work from and greatly facilitated producing our final English translation. By autumn of 2004 John was ready with the English version and sent it to Josef van Ess who generously took the time to read through it with his

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<sup>1</sup> 'Der *Ibrīz*'; 'Ibrīziana'; 'Zwischen Traditionalismus'; 'Syrisch'.



characteristic meticulous care. John then undertook to draw up an extensive outline of the book's individual chapters, while Bernd applied himself to the task of supplying the text with source references and notes.

In March 2006 and again in April, we had the pleasure of meeting with Professor van Ess, first in Tübingen and then in Amsterdam. On each occasion we spent several days with him discussing his criticisms and suggestions. We wish to express our warmest gratitude to Professor van Ess for his numerous clarifications of obscure points in the text and his hospitality and enthusiastic support in general. It goes without saying that any remaining shortcomings of the translation are wholly our responsibility.

And for their help with occasional points we also wish to express our thanks to Reinhard Weipert, Knut Vikør and Trudy Kamperveen.

It had been our original intention to dedicate our translation of the *Ibrīz* to Richard Gramlich on the occasion of his eightieth birthday, as we are both great admirers of his scholarly achievement, in particular his splendid translations of major works of the earliest centuries of Sufism.<sup>2</sup> John especially felt indebted to Gramlich for the help he gave him with his translation of Aflākī's *Manāqib al-ʿārifīn*. Unfortunately, Gramlich passed away toward the end of 2006 before the present translation came to see the light of publication.

Embarking on the a translation of the *Ibrīz* has proved, for us both, to be a rewarding adventure. Each of us had previously been engaged in work on other Sufi personalities in other parts of the Islamic world. Delving into the Maghrib and the milieu of Fez has been a new departure.

Amsterdam — Utrecht

Summer 2007

John O'Kane

Bernd Radtke

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<sup>2</sup> See Fritz Meier, *Essays*, Introduction, p. 6, where Gramlich's publications are briefly discussed.

## TRANSLATORS' INTRODUCTION

The title page of the present book straightway confronts the reader with two distinct personalities. The first is Aḥmad b. al-Mubārak al-Lamaṭī<sup>1</sup> who is the 'author', that is to say the compiler of the work. As for the contents of his compilation, it consists of the 'words' of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh, though not, one should hasten to add, al-Dabbāgh's words alone. Al-Lamaṭī frequently enough adds his own digressions and ample comments. A sizeable part of Chapter Seven, for example, is taken up with a completely independent treatise by al-Lamaṭī.<sup>2</sup> None the less, as far as we can judge and are meant to judge on the basis of al-Lamaṭī's testimony, al-Dabbāgh is the dominant personality, and al-Lamaṭī the admirer and devoted servant.

But what do we know or can we learn about our two protagonists aside from the picture that the *Ibrīz* itself provides us with. Fortunately for us, the chronicler al-Qādirī<sup>3</sup> (d. 1187/1773) has left us remarkably vivid portraits of both men. The text of his entry<sup>4</sup> on al-Lamaṭī runs:

'And among those who died during the year (i.e. 1156/1743) was the most learned scholar of the time, matchless in this day and age, the cavalier of teaching and study, bearer of the banner of composition and investigation, our shaykh Abū'l-ʿAbbās Sayyidī Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Lamaṭī al-Sijilmāsī. He possessed a wide mastery and erudition in logic, eloquence, *uṣūl*, *ḥadīth*, Qurʾānic recitation and commentary. He studied Qurʾānic recitation in all seven traditions of recitation under the son of his maternal aunt, the great imam, the Friend of God and godly ascetic, Sayyidī Aḥmad al-Ḥabīb.<sup>5</sup> He set out and entered the city of Fez in the year 1110/1699-1700. He then studied with Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Qusanṭīnī,<sup>6</sup> al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Jarandī,<sup>7</sup> and

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<sup>1</sup> On the *nisba* al-Lamaṭī see al-Akhḍar (Lakhdar): *al-Ḥayāh*, cited in Meier, *Essays*, p. 420, under additions of the author for the English translation.

<sup>2</sup> Here pp. 778-826.

<sup>3</sup> Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, pp. 320 f.

<sup>4</sup> See *Nashr* IV, 40-42.

<sup>5</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>6</sup> On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 288, fn. 2.

<sup>7</sup> On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 305, fn. 5.

Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Masnāwī.<sup>8</sup> And he studied grammar with Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Salām al-Ḥulwī.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, the distinguished Sayyidī ʿAlī al-Hurayshī<sup>10</sup> conferred on him an *ijāza* for transmitting al-Bukhārī.

Al-Lamaṭī had an inclination to compare the words of the religious scholars and to study [matters] with them, all the while giving them answers in accordance with the [scholarly] craft and [its] tools. He was matchless in pronouncements he brought forth from his understanding or on the basis of individual judgement (*raʿy*) regarding what seemed right to him. Nor did he care whether he contradicted the great or the small who lived before him or came after him. He attributed to himself absolute *ijtihād*, and he refuted the great among those who lived earlier and more recently. He declared that if they'd met him, they'd have profited from him.

Moreover, he was abundant in his praise of the rank of our lord Muḥammad, the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And he brought people over to the intensity of his love and inculcated this love in various ways<sup>11</sup> as no one else among those I've met was able to do. When he spoke of this, weeping came over him, and it would occur while he was engaged in teaching. Occasionally it persisted for quite some time. But on other occasions laughter and joy came over him. And this might also be while he was teaching. He'd then tell some funny stories and go on laughing a long time.

I myself was present at all of this during his teaching sessions. And he derived regulations (*aḥkām*) from Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīths* from the Prophet without anyone as an intermediary, as is established and recorded in the old well-known books of *fiqh*.

During his lecture in the Qarawiyyīn in the year 1148/1735, I heard him recite from memory fifty *ḥadīths* with their *isnāds* as well as the defects and the answers concerning them that occurred to him.

And al-Lamaṭī harbored great concern and love for his shaykh, Mawlāy ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh al-Idrīsī al-Ḥasanī. Indeed, he compiled a book about him. And he compiled a work about the meaning of God's word—He is exalted: 'And He is with you wherever you are' (57/4). People of his time disagreed about this

8 Unidentified.

9 Unidentified.

10 On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 309, fn. 7.

11 The text may be corrupt; sense uncertain.

book. Some approved of it. Others, however, rebuked him because of it and denounced him, and they were the more numerous. Among these was our shaykh, the great authority, Sayyidī al-Sarghīnī<sup>12</sup> and he wrote a book in refutation of the work. Whoever wishes to know which of the two is the truth, let him look at the two works together.

Al-Lamaṭī also composed the *Kitāb al-labs ʿan al-masāʾil al-khams*.<sup>13</sup> And [there is] his work on: *Dalālat al-ʿāmm ʿalā baʿd afrādihi*.<sup>14</sup> Then the *Kitāb al-ajwiba al-taskitiyya fiʾl-asʿila al-subkiyya*.<sup>15</sup> Moreover, he wrote notes<sup>16</sup> to Sayyidī Saʿīd Qaddūra's<sup>17</sup> *Sharḥ* on the *Sullam*.<sup>18</sup> And he wrote other works as well.

A group of students in Fez studied with al-Lamaṭī. Along with them I myself read under him the *Ṣughrā* of al-Sanūsī<sup>19</sup> together with the author's own commentary, as well as al-Maḥallī's<sup>20</sup> commentary on the *Jamʿ al-jamāwi*<sup>21</sup>—its text and its commentary. And I studied the *Shifāʾ* of [al-Qādī] ʿIyāḍ<sup>22</sup> and a part of the *Sullam*. I was also present [during teaching] of passages from Qurʾānic interpretation and al-Bukhārī. In his day and age al-Lamaṭī was accorded the leading position in religious science in Fez. He was looked upon with great respect and reverence.

Al-Lamaṭī earned an income from cattle and farming, and he practiced commerce and selling by means of credit with a fixed date [of repayment]. He guarded over his coin and was competitive when it came to money and he did well.

He was born around 1090/1679 and died in the plague on Friday, 12 Jumādā I 1156/4 July 1743. He was buried with his shaykh Mawlāy ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ in the ʿAdwa of Andalus Fez.<sup>23</sup>

12 On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 319.

13 This may be the work indicated in GAL II, p. 614, no. 5.

14 Text appears to be corrupt.

15 Not in GAL.

16 *ṭurar*.

17 On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 288, ftn. 5.

18 See GAL, S I, p. 843.

19 See GAL, S II, p. 355.

20 On him cf. GAL, S II, p. 138; he died 864/1459.

21 'Ibriziana', p. 143, XC; see also *Ibriz* I, p. 410, here p. 492.

22 'Ibriziana', p. 138, LX; see also *Ibriz* I, 254, here p. 328.

23 A particular section of the city; cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index.

Now before we consider the above portrait more closely, let's also look at what al-Qādirī has to tell us about al-Dabbāgh:

'And among those who died during the year (i.e. 1132/1719-20) was the *sharīf* whose blessing is sought after, Abū Fāris Mawlāy 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Mas'ūd al-Dabbāgh al-Idrīsī al-Ḥasanī. His name "al-Dabbāgh" isn't due to the known profession (*dabbāgh*=tanner) but it's a surname that belongs to his family in Fez and they're still called by it today. They came to bear this surname for the reason we'll mention—if God is willing! The author of *al-Durr al-sanī*<sup>24</sup> says: "It's not known that they ever practiced this trade. However, the reason for the surname—but God knows best—is what I came upon in a document that's presently in their hands and is dated 790/1388. It orders that they be granted an income from the tax of the Dār al-dabgh in Salā<sup>25</sup> when they were living there. That's why they acquired the family name in the intensive form (*fa<sup>c</sup>āl*) from *dabgh*—but God knows best! They then came to Fez from the said city at the beginning of the 900s/1500s according to what's found in their documents from Salā." When he says "in the intensive form" he may here mean the intensive of the *nisba*. Al-Dabbāgh belongs to this blessed family group. And their household is a very famous household in Fez.

Our shaykh, the highly learned *ḥāfiẓ* Sayyidī Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Lamaṭī al-Sijilmāsī has described al-Dabbāgh as endowed with the qualities of divine knowledge (*'irfān*). He's reported about him wondrous matters to do with a variety of unveilings and secrets of prophethood in a book he entitled *al-Ibrīz fī manāqib al-shaykh 'Abd al-'Azīz* which fills a [whole] volume. Most of it, however, is unknown in the conduct of the Sufis, doesn't belong to their characteristics and isn't mentioned in their writings. In fact, one should only read the book after having been warned about this because what it contains contradicts the path of the Sufis. We beseech God for protection and safety from the likes of this! A certain person said something very close to this, as the imam Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Lakhmī al-Shaṭṭanawfī al-Shāfi'ī al-Miṣrī (d. 713/1314),<sup>26</sup> shaykh of the Qur'ānic reciters in Egypt—whom al-Suyūṭī made known in his *Husn al-muḥāḍara*<sup>27</sup>—has transmitted in his book the *Bahjat al-*

<sup>24</sup> On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 278, fn. 2.

<sup>25</sup> See the description of Salā in the EI s.v.

<sup>26</sup> GAL II, p. 118; S II, p. 147; died 713/1313.

<sup>27</sup> GAL II, p. 157, no. 279.

*asrār*<sup>28</sup> where he reports about shaykh °Abd al-Qādir b. Mūsā al-Jīlānī al-Ḥasanī.<sup>29</sup> Al-Dabbāgh also gave answers to much of what was said by the shaykh Zarrūq,<sup>30</sup> al-°Izz b. °Abd al-Salām,<sup>31</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-Kinānī al-°Asqalānī,<sup>32</sup> and others as well.

While he was alive, al-Dabbāgh had followers. Moreover, it was claimed that he received training from shaykhs that no one is acquainted with, neither we nor anyone else we've come across. He said that he met them in this region and mentioned that one of them was Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnawī.<sup>33</sup> If he meant shaykh Sayyidī Aḥmad al-Yamanī [al-Barnawī], he died before al-Dabbāgh was born. We've presented an explanation of this in his biography under the year 1088/1677.<sup>34</sup> The date makes it impossible [for al-Dabbāgh] to have met him while the latter was alive. If I were to interpret this in a supernatural sense (*ghayban*), here too he makes it impossible because he stated clearly that it was a visible meeting (*ẓāhiran*). If the al-Barnawī [in question] was someone else, we're unacquainted with him.

Al-Dabbāgh died in the year 1142 (read: 1132/1719-20). He was buried outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ, near the *rawḍat* al-Anwār<sup>35</sup> between [the grave of] Sayyidī al-Darrās b. Ismā°il<sup>36</sup> and Sayyidī °Alī b. Ṣāliḥ.<sup>37</sup> A cupola was erected above his grave and it still remains the same today.<sup>38</sup>

To begin with we may leave aside specific details in both reports. What's immediately clear is al-Qādirī's sympathy and high esteem for his teacher al-Lamaṭī, whereas he's far more reserved, one may even say negative, when it comes to al-Dabbāgh whom he almost presents in the light of a charlatan. Al-Qādirī doesn't go into the question as to why his honored teacher al-Lamaṭī isn't at all compromised by his attachment and relationship with this somewhat ambiguous person. In any case,

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28 GAL I, p. 435.

29 A Persian mystic living in Baghdad and credited with being the founder of the earliest Sufi order, the Qādiriyya; died 561/1166; cf. EI s.n.

30 See here p. 549, fn. 29.

31 GAL I, p. 439; died 660/1262.

32 See here p. 147, fn. 119.

33 See here p. 133, fn. 75.

34 *Nashr* II, pp. 224 ff.

35 *rawḍa*: Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 134 f., describes a *rawḍa* as being a private tomb; he doesn't mention this particular tomb.

36 Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 114.

37 Not mentioned in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

38 *Nashr* III, pp. 245 f.

the portrait he sketches of al-Lamaṭī corresponds fully to what we encounter in the *Ibrīz*. And likewise, his representation of al-Dabbāgh, leaving aside the negative aspects, is perfectly in harmony with what we encounter in our text. Moreover, for anyone familiar with the character of the standard biographical literature of the period, al-Qādirī's weaving together of real, individual traits in these portraits is quite unexpected, indeed almost a surprise.

Al-Lamaṭī is the professor. Al-Dabbāgh, by contrast, is the charismatic personality, unschooled (*ummī*),<sup>39</sup> though not illiterate, and yet, significantly, devoid of a *madrassa* education—which is precisely what the accomplished professor al-Lamaṭī possesses in full measure, as is made clear from the array of learned religious literature he cites throughout the *Ibrīz*.<sup>40</sup> In passing one may note that with few exceptions this literature consists of works by 'Eastern' authors, among whom al-Suyūṭī plays a leading role.<sup>41</sup>

Al-Lamaṭī's learning, aside from Chapter Seven, doesn't make up the contents but rather provides the basis for the structure and the questions posed in the *Ibrīz*. Al-Lamaṭī—and occasionally other individuals from theological circles—question the enlightened mystic al-Dabbāgh, drawing on their finely honed knowledge of the religious sciences. Most often it's a matter of age-old controversies concerning which al-Lamaṭī, the intellectual, seeks authoritative advice from al-Dabbāgh, the charismatic personality. Naturally, al-Lamaṭī possesses up-to-date knowledge on these learned topics and continually refers to the relevant literature. And of course, the erudition he displays isn't by way of vaunting his own scholarly accomplishments but is solely intended to corroborate the superiority of al-Dabbāgh's illuminated knowledge. One may here speak of the intellectual capitulating before the charismatic. It calls to mind the development of al-Ghazzālī who abandoned his post of professor to devote himself fully to the realm of piety and mysticism—if one can trust his own account in this regard.

The logic behind the *Ibrīz*'s compositional structure, which is made up of an Introduction containing al-Dabbāgh's *vita* followed by twelve chapters of very varying length, is by no means immediately obvious. The first and the longest chapter

<sup>39</sup> See Author's Introduction, p. 116, fn. 6.

<sup>40</sup> Cf. the list in 'Ibrīziana' which contains 137 books.

<sup>41</sup> Al-Suyūṭī appears sixteen times in the list of sources in 'Ibrīziana'.

consists of al-Lamaṭī's questions and al-Dabbāgh's answers and explanations regarding subjects connected with a series of mostly well-known *ḥadīths*. Is it by chance that al-Lamaṭī doesn't begin with questions about the Qur'ān which are only dealt with in Chapter Two? By far the longest discussion<sup>42</sup> concerns the *ḥadīth* about the seven *aḥruf* of the Qur'ān, commonly taken to refer to the seven different forms of Qur'ānic recitation. And here as well al-Lamaṭī doesn't forgo the opportunity to demonstrate his extensive erudition regarding this subject.<sup>43</sup>

On the other hand, religious learning is not the issue. There's almost no connection with the written learned tradition in al-Dabbāgh's interpretation that constues the seven *aḥruf* as being seven dispositions in the Prophet Muḥammad's nature upon which (= *alā*) the Qur'ān was sent down (*unzila*). This leads al-Dabbāgh to develop his own unique Muḥammadology which has been rightly considered by others to be the most salient feature of the book.<sup>44</sup> His view of the Prophet doesn't simply play a role in the context of interpreting the *ḥadīth* in question but it accompanies us through the whole book. As for the historical origin of this particular conception of the Prophet, we have been unable to find any evident sources.

A second important subject dealt with in Chapter One is the prophetic nature of certain dreams. The chief characteristics of al-Dabbāgh's views in this domain are also not found in earlier sources.

In Chapter Two, which deals primarily with commenting on well-known Qur'ānic verses, the section about the Syriac language (*suryāniyya*)<sup>45</sup> is of special interest. Here al-Dabbāgh talks about mankind's first language, the origin of language in general, this as well being an old subject much discussed in the fields of theology and philology. In his pronouncements he goes as far as to develop an alphabet for the alleged Syriac language.

It's more difficult to characterize the subjects dealt with in Chapter Three. In principle, al-Dabbāgh sets about explaining the difference between darkness (*ḡalām*) and light (*nūr*), and their respective effects on people and people's actions. Also discussed is the permissibility of playing chess and a form of checkers

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<sup>42</sup> Pp. 205-306.

<sup>43</sup> See al-Qādirī's remarks about his erudition in the biographical sketch cited above.

<sup>44</sup> See here pp. xx f.

<sup>45</sup> See Radtke, 'Syrisch', pp. 473 ff.



(*dāma*), eating onions and garlic, and issues around visiting the bathhouse. Not only in this chapter but throughout the book, al-Lamaṭī introduces stories into the text, mostly stories of a didactic nature which often present interesting insights into contemporary circumstances and attitudes.

Chapter Four takes up an old theme of Sufism which had already been addressed *in nuce* during the first two centuries of Sufism's history. Connected with the emergence of the concept of *walāya* was the elaboration of a hierarchy of saints. Before al-Dabbāgh, Ibn al-ʿArabī<sup>46</sup> had had much to say on the subject. But al-Dabbāgh and al-Lamaṭī are very little influenced, either in this domain or more generally, by Ibn al-ʿArabī even if he is mentioned in a few passages. This fact is immediately clear in their language.<sup>47</sup> In Chapter Four we have a detailed description of the *Dīwān al-ṣāliḥīn*, the Council of the godly in charge of regulating the world, which carries out its function in the Cave of *Ḥirāʾ* near Mecca.

Chapters Five and Six both have a specifically Sufi orientation. They deal with the conditions that must be fulfilled if someone is to be properly qualified to exercise the office of a *shaykh al-tarbiya*, i.e. a shaykh who undertakes spiritual training. This is a classic subject that's been treated in Sufi handbooks<sup>48</sup> ever since the appearance of the *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* of al-Suhrawardī,<sup>49</sup> which is itself the object of commentary in Chapter Six. Al-Lamaṭī structures his detailed commentary in Chapter Six around a versification of the *ʿAwārif* produced by the Moroccan al-Sharīshī (d. 641/1243). And in the final parts of the chapter al-Dabbāgh speaks about his own shaykhs concerning whom, as al-Qādirī rightly points out, we have no further information.

Chapter Seven falls into two sections. In the first one,<sup>50</sup> well-known controversial sayings of famous Sufi authorities such as Ibn Mashīsh, al-Shādhilī and Ibn al-Fāriḍ, are commented on. The main section,<sup>51</sup> however, consists of a theological treatise by al-Lamaṭī in which al-Dabbāgh has no role to play. Al-Lamaṭī surveys the time-worn, lengthy debate which had been ignited by

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46 Chodkiewicz, *Sceau*, p. 113.

47 Radkte, 'Der Ibriz', p. 332.

48 For an overview see 'Two Treatises', pp. 146 f.

49 Gramlich, *Gaben*, pp. 1 f.; al-Suhrawardī died 632/1234.

50 Pp. 747-778.

51 Pp. 778-826.

al-Ghazzālī's words: *laysa fī'l-imbkân abda<sup>c</sup> mimmā kân*.<sup>52</sup> Al-Lamaṭī shows himself to be well-informed about the positions represented by the chief participants. His primary source is the treatise by Nūr al-Dīn al-Samhūdī (d. 911/1505-06):<sup>53</sup> *Īdāh al-bayān li-mā arādahū'l-Ḥujja*<sup>54</sup> *min 'laysa fī'l-imbkân abda<sup>c</sup> mimmā kân'*. This work is an attempt to refute the treatise *al-Ḍiyā' al-mutala<sup>3</sup>li' fī ta<sup>c</sup>qqub al-Iḥyā' li'l-Ghazzālī* by Ibn al-Munayyir (d. 683/1284) which attacks the celebrated words of al-Ghazzālī. Al-Lamaṭī's position accords with Ibn al-Munayyir, although he refrains from condemning al-Ghazzālī and takes refuge in the assertion that the words in question have been falsely attributed to al-Ghazzālī.

Al-Lamaṭī shows himself to be a true *muṭtahid muṭlaq*, thereby confirming al-Qādirī's judgement. His treatment of the controversy is organized into clearly subdivided sections and testifies to an acute intellect. On the other hand, one may ask oneself what the treatise has to do in this context. Al-Dabbāgh only reappears at the end. He has already died and now communicates a message to al-Lamaṭī in a dream. Was al-Lamaṭī out to show his theological colleagues that his intellect hadn't suffered through association with the somewhat ambiguous figure al-Dabbāgh?

Of the remaining Chapters Eight, Nine, Ten, Eleven and Twelve, Chapter Nine presents an exception. The subjects of the other chapters: Eight on Adam, Ten on Barzakh, Eleven on Paradise, and Twelve on Hell, i.e. Adamology, cosmology and eschatology, chiefly draw their material from Qur<sup>3</sup>ānic and *ḥadīth* commentaries.

Illumination (*fath*, or occasionally *kashf*), the subject of Chapter Nine, already occurs in the Introduction and remains a key concept throughout the *Ibrīz*. Closely connected with it is another complex of ideas, namely the *ṭarīqa muḥammadiyya* which by means of an ascent through the cosmos leads the aspirant to behold and meet with the Prophet in a waking state (*ru<sup>3</sup>yat al-nabī yaqzatan*). Due to this encounter, a person endowed with illumination (*al-maṭṭūḥ 'alayhi*), in this case our al-Dabbāgh, comes to acquire a store of supernatural knowledge

52 The controversy is analyzed in detail in Ormsby, *Theodicy*.

53 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXIX.

54 This refers to al-Ghazzālī himself, i.e. Ḥujjat al-Islām.

which is far superior to the knowledge of the 'normal' religious scholars.<sup>55</sup>

Both al-Dabbāgh and al-Lamaṭī were born in the second half of the 11th/17th century, al-Dabbāgh a few years or so after al-Lamaṭī.<sup>56</sup> This was a time of political unrest in Morocco, a period of transition from the Saʿdī to the ʿAlawī dynasty. Here and there in the introductory *vita* of al-Dabbāgh one finds an echo of this.

As previously mentioned, it's often not possible to trace statements of al-Dabbāgh to earlier historical-intellectual contexts. None the less, some indications in this regard are given in the *vita*. There mention is made of Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh<sup>57</sup> whose *vita* is meant to have provided a model for the *Jawāhir al-maʿānī*—the 'bible' of the Tijāniyya. The question deserves attention but must await further research.<sup>58</sup> As for the *Jawāhir al-maʿānī* being influenced by the *Ibrīz*, even a cursory comparison of the two books is sufficient to show that one can't speak of any dependence of the one work on the other.

Another person who's often mentioned in the *vita* is al-ʿArabī al-Fishtālī<sup>59</sup> who gave his daughter in marriage to al-Dabbāgh's father Masʿūd<sup>60</sup> but died before al-Dabbāgh was born. He as well was in contact with Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh.<sup>61</sup> And one of al-Fishtālī's teachers was the famous al-Yūsī,<sup>62</sup> whose *Muḥāḍarāt*, however, doesn't show the least affinity with al-Dabbāgh's world of thought.

It's interesting to note here that a modern author, Muḥammad b. Mukhtār al-Sūsī, makes the following comparison between a nineteenth-century Sufi, Muḥammad b. Muḥammad al-Maymūnī al-Timggidshtī (d. 1274/1858), and al-Dabbāgh:

'His love for the Prophet can't be measured. One is only aware of something like this in the case of ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh al-Fāsī. He (i.e. al-Timggidshtī) frequently recollected the Prophet,

<sup>55</sup> On this subject see Radtke, 'Der *Ibrīz*', pp. 330 f.

<sup>56</sup> On p. 121 of Author's Introduction al-Lamaṭī tells us he was a babe in the cradle at the time of al-Fishtālī's death, i.e. 1090/1679. Oddly, neither the *Ibrīz* nor al-Qādirī gives a precise date for al-Dabbāgh's birth. In the *Ibrīz* it's simply indicated that al-Dabbāgh was born a few years after al-Fishtālī had died.

<sup>57</sup> See p. 121, fn. 28.

<sup>58</sup> 'Ehrenrettung', forthcoming.

<sup>59</sup> See pp. 118, fn. 11.

<sup>60</sup> See pp. 119 ff.

<sup>61</sup> See fn. 57 above.

<sup>62</sup> On him see Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 277.

and he became wild (*yaṭīsh*) and enraptured (*yaṭrab*) during the invocation of blessings on the Prophet and his eulogies. No gathering of his was without recollection of the Prophet and his entitlements, and without his praise, and without recollection of his rank with God. He also aroused in his students love and reverence for the Prophet and thus they frequently had occasion to see the Prophet in a dream or in a light nap close to waking so that the Prophet gave them glad tidings and they then felt still greater love for him and still greater reverence for their shaykh. The glad tidings of the Prophet, which fulfilled the station of supervision(?), came to them in unlimited abundance. If someone asked the shaykh for permission in a matter, the shaykh would order him to make an effort so as to be able to ask the Prophet for advice and then he'd experience seeing the Prophet (in a dream) so that he could ask him himself.'<sup>63</sup>

This reminds one of much that we hear about in the *Ibrīz*. In this connection let us touch on a broader subject—but not with the intention of entering into old polemics. The debate around so-called Neo-Sufism<sup>64</sup> suffered, to a great extent if not exclusively, from a lack of knowledge of relevant primary sources on the part of the participants. Our translation makes it clear in many respects how erroneous numerous generalizations about Neo-Sufism have been. In the case of the example of the so-called 'union with the Prophet',<sup>65</sup> it's clear just how far astray current misconceptions could go. Moreover, we should point out that all future pronouncements on the subject will absolutely have to take account of the publication of volume II of Fritz Meier's *Bemerkungen zur Muḥammadverehrung*.

And some brief remark should be made about the reception of the *Ibrīz*. It's widely acknowledged that in the domain of Sufism today the *Ibrīz* is a well known book. But even toward the end of the eighteenth century the work was read in Egypt, as al-Zabīdī (d. 1205/1791) informs us.<sup>66</sup> In the first half of the nineteenth century al-Ḥājj ʿUmar, founder of a Tijānī state on the upper Niger, incorporated extensive quotations from the *Ibrīz* into his *Rimāḥ*.<sup>67</sup> Undoubtedly, as scholars come to pay more attention to

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<sup>63</sup> Meier, *Taṣliya*, pp. 438 f.

<sup>64</sup> O'Fahey/Radtke, 'Neo-Sufism', pp. 52 ff.; recently: NkG, pp. 294 ff.

<sup>65</sup> NkG, p. 296.

<sup>66</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 123, fn. 109.

<sup>67</sup> Radtke, 'Rimāḥ', pp. 85 f.

developments in Sufism during the last two and a half centuries further examples of the book's influence will be found.

In concluding let us say a few words about our working method. Our translation is based on the two-volume Damascus edition of the *Ibrîz* (1984-86) undertaken by Muḥammad ʿAdnān al-Shammā<sup>68</sup>. Occasionally we've compared this text with two earlier printed editions.<sup>69</sup>

Naturally, it was our primary goal to produce a correct as well as a readable translation. As for the commentary in the notes, we were able to make use of earlier work by the editor and in some places to expand upon it. This was especially the case with regard to information about individuals referred to in the text. Shammā<sup>68</sup> didn't have access to western, specifically Moroccan literature. In addition, we've made an effort to trace the written sources that al-Lamaṭī cites. However, for various reasons this wasn't always possible. Some of the literature al-Lamaṭī cites therefore still remains unidentified. In some cases the fault may lie with al-Lamaṭī, though generally he's by no means a slipshod, careless author.

Some concepts and passages required a longer commentary. At the same time limits have had to be imposed, and this has no doubt led to a certain disproportionality in parts of the commentary. It goes without saying that in this regard much work still remains for future scholars to do.

Before the present English translation a complete translation of the *Ibrîz* appeared in Turkish,<sup>70</sup> as well as a partial one in French<sup>71</sup> that offers selections of the text chiefly to be found in volume I of Shammā<sup>68</sup>'s edition. We've made no use of either of these translations.

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<sup>68</sup> On him see Radtke, 'Zwischen Traditionalismus', pp. 241 ff.

<sup>69</sup> Both Cairene editions: one from the end of the 19th, the other from the 20th century.

<sup>70</sup> *Eş-Şeyh Abdülazîz Debbâğ Hazretleri El-Ibriz. Mütercim Celâl Yıldırım*. Istanbul 1979.

<sup>71</sup> *Shaykh ʿAbd al-ʿAzîz al-Dabbâgh. Paroles d'or. Kitâb al-Ibrîz. Enseignements consignés par son disciple Ibn Mubâarak al-Lamfî. Préface, notes et traduction de l'arabe par Zakia Zouanat*. Beyrouth 2001. — This is a translation of a relatively small part of the whole work.

## AN OUTLINE OF THE *IBRĪZ*

In so large and varied a work as the *Ibrīz*, even the motivated specialist may find it a challenge to familiarize himself with the full range and scope of the book. We therefore thought it would be useful to provide an overview of the book's contents in the form of a relatively detailed outline. Attention has especially been given to noting Sufi ideas and practices that one finds expounded in abundance particularly in Chapters Three, Five, Six and Nine. Despite the oversimplification and the arbitrary choices an outline must inevitably entail, we hope it will help orient the reader and facilitate access to the multitude of subjects contained in the *Ibrīz*. In addition, a brief outline precedes each individual chapter.

It strikes one that **al-Lamaṭī's Introduction** has a rather different character from the rest of the book. It can be considered in line with other hagiographical works that attempt to present the ideas and personality, but especially the miracles, of a Friend of God, i.e. a living saint who possesses extraordinary gifts and insights from God. **Section One** is in fact devoted to an earlier Friend of God, Sayyidī al-ʿArabī al-Fishtālī, who died before ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz al-Dabbāgh was even born. The author is at pains to gather evidence that will establish al-Fishtālī's reputation as a great Friend of God. Numerous miracles, especially his feats of clairvoyance, are recorded by way of underpinning his spiritual stature. The Prophet Muḥammad appears to al-Fishtālī and tells him that in the future al-Dabbāgh will be a great saint, and before al-Fishtālī dies he leaves a skullcap and a special pair of shoes with al-Dabbāgh's mother as a 'trust' for him. After al-Dabbāgh is born and has reached puberty, his mother, in the year 1109/1697-8, passes on to him the trust left by al-Fishtālī. Al-Dabbāgh immediately puts the skullcap on his head. He reports: 'Just then a great heat came over me so that my eyes filled with tears. And I perceived what Sayyidī al-ʿArabī said to me and I understood his instructions—praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!'

In **Section Two** the focus shifts from al-Fishtālī to al-Dabbāgh himself. An account of al-Dabbāgh's spiritual searching is given which culminates in an interesting description of how, having

spent the night reciting the *Burda* in the shrine of ʿAlī b. Hirzihim, he comes out and has an encounter with the immortal al-Khaḍir. The latter consents to confer on him an unusual litany which he's told he must recite seven thousand times a day and in which he beseeches God to cause him to meet the Prophet Muḥammad in this world. Al-Khaḍir then entrusts him to ʿUmar al-Hawwārī, the custodian of Ibn Hirzihim's shrine, and tells al-Hawwārī to look after him. At first al-Dabbāgh has difficulty reciting the new litany so many times during the day but eventually he's able to complete the full recitation between the first light of day and sunrise. Shortly after al-Hawwārī's death in 1125/1713, al-Dabbāgh experiences illumination (*fath*) which is described at some length and leaves him in a terrified state of mind (pp. 129-33). He then meets the black man ʿAbd Allāh al-Barnāwī who is a great Friend of God and has come to Fez especially to give him guidance at this critical moment in his development. An amusing story about their relationship depicts how al-Barnāwī changes himself into a beautiful woman, 'wearing perfume... and clean', who pursues al-Dabbāgh all around Fez in an attempt to seduce him. When it's clear that al-Dabbāgh is determined not to give in to temptation, al-Barnāwī changes back to his true identity and praises al-Dabbāgh who in the meantime has sought refuge in the crowded Qarawiyyīn Mosque. Finally, after having kept company with al-Barnāwī for several months, al-Dabbāgh attains his goal and has a meeting with the Prophet Muḥammad, the lord of creation.

Several other spiritual masters are referred to who had a role in giving al-Dabbāgh spiritual guidance. It's noted that each time one of these masters dies, al-Dabbāgh inherits all the 'secrets' the master had possessed. Similarly, al-Dabbāgh met Sayyidī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Miṣrī who was the Support (*al-ghawth*) of the era, i.e. the highest ranking Friend of God in his day and age. Sayyidī Aḥmad was then head of the Dīwān al-ṣāliḥīn (the Council of the godly) who, with God's permission, control all the events that happen in the world every day. When al-Dabbāgh himself is admitted to the Dīwān, the other members, as a warning, tell him stories about the disasters that can befall someone who divulges 'the secret' to ordinary people. Al-Lamaṭī transmits five of the many stories they told al-Dabbāgh on that occasion (pp. 137-44). The fourth story, which is also the longest, is perhaps the most interesting.

What follows in **Section Three** are different categories of miracles connected with al-Dabbāgh. Al-Lamaṭī first stresses what he considers the greatest of al-Dabbāgh's miracles, namely his sound doctrinal belief. Although he has no formal religious training, he enjoys direct vision of the correct doctrinal position on the whole range of controversial topics dealt with by the religious sciences in Islam. For instance, he is capable of refuting any specious arguments that have arisen over time, arguments which normally only the most highly trained religious scholars can deal with correctly. After elaborating on this, al-Lamaṭī recounts a series of intimate miracles that occurred between himself and al-Dabbāgh. For example, when al-Lamaṭī and other disciples accompanied al-Dabbāgh on a journey to Ibn Mashīsh's shrine and they might have lost their way at night or been caught in very heavy rains, intuitively al-Dabbāgh always made the right decision to avoid any perils. The theme of the dangers presented for the Friend by indulging in clairvoyance is briefly touched upon (p. 154) and will receive fuller treatment in later chapters.

Pp. 156-63 contain miracles witnessed and recorded by the jurist Muḥammad al-Zīrārī. They include amusing accounts that illustrate the intimate closeness between al-Dabbāgh and his disciples. Nor are the anecdotes characterized by an air of prudishness. Al-Dabbāgh reveals, for instance, that he's aware that al-Zīrārī when indulging in horseplay with one of his wives, looked directly at her genitals. Al-Dabbāgh orders him: 'Don't do it again! Direct your gaze toward the Ka'ba...!' Al-Zīrārī likewise recounts how one night he was obliged by circumstances to have his two wives sleep in the same room with him. A fourth bed in the room remained unoccupied. During the night he felt the desire to have intercourse with one wife and did so, thinking the other was asleep. Later the same night he had intercourse with the other wife, thinking the first one was now asleep. The next day al-Dabbāgh meets him and reproaches him for this behavior, saying neither of the wives had been asleep at the time. When al-Zīrārī asks him how he knows these things, al-Dabbāgh replies: 'Who do you think was in the fourth bed?' Besides being humorous, the anecdote illustrates how the genuine spiritual guide is engaged in watching over his disciples even with regard to the most intimate matters.

Pp. 163-71 present miracles witnessed and recorded by the jurist 'Alī b. 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣabbāghī. The incident involving a ram that al-Ṣabbāghī was supposed to bring to al-Dabbāgh is



recounted in a confused and somewhat clumsy manner characteristic of oral narrative. And again the tone of some of the anecdotes is very down to earth and obviously meant to be entertaining, as well as to illustrate al-Dabbāgh's tolerant, good-natured outlook. A typical example of this is the following. Al-Ṣabbāghī reports: '...I was a man who indulged in much amorous play with my wife... I thought up numerous variations of amorous play with her. I mentioned some of this to a close friend...and he mentioned it to the Shaykh...in the manner of someone who reproached me. At that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—laughed and said: "He's only told you some of the things he does. There's more than that. In fact he does such-and-such, and this thing and the other! ...But this is in accordance with the Sunna. Everything like this a person does counts as good deeds."'

Two other jurists contribute further written testimony about miracles of al-Dabbāgh that they witnessed. After this al-Lamaṭī goes on to describe miracles he himself had occasion to observe that involved third parties (pp. 178-87). A rather strange, moving report he presents concerns al-Lamaṭī's successive wives. He begins by explaining that he was deeply in love with his first wife who was very intelligent and gentle. Al-Dabbāgh is aware of this and asks him: 'Do you love me like you love her or do you love her more?' Unfortunately, al-Lamaṭī replies: 'I love her more.' He excuses himself to the reader, explaining that at that time he was still ignorant of the extent of al-Dabbāgh's spiritual rank. He recounts: 'The Shaykh...was concerned because of this...because no good comes of the disciple until nothing remains in his heart but the shaykh, God and the Prophet... The Shaykh said: "Associating with the Friends of God is like eating poison. Sayyidī So-and-So left [his disciple] neither a wife nor a child...and caused him to be alone with him.'" This is the prelude first to the death of his wife, then of his young son, as well as the death of a second wife that he came to love. But after all this suffering and loss, al-Lamaṭī concludes: 'It was then that God bestowed on me love of the Shaykh...a love than which no higher love exists... I married [a third time]...and my heart didn't become attached [to my wife], and she's safe and in good health—praise be to God!' There will be numerous examples in later chapters of how the disciple must make sacrifices and undergo ordeals to prove his loyalty and his exclusive love for his shaykh.

In the concluding portion of his Introduction (pp. 188-97), al-Lamaṭī declares that he wishes to close his account with an awesome miracle just as he began with an awesome one. He then describes how he tested al-Dabbāgh—who had no formal religious education—by asking him whether words that he quotes for him are from the Qurʾān or a genuine *ḥadīth* or a divine *ḥadīth* (*ḥadīth qudsī*). Al-Dabbāgh demonstrates beyond any doubt that he's always able to distinguish correctly between these categories of speech because he sees different kinds of lights emerge from the words the way steam comes out of someone's mouth in the winter. And he has interesting things to say about the states that came over the Prophet at the time he uttered these categories of speech. Al-Dabbāgh compares the states of the Prophet on these three different occasions to progressively more intense degrees of fever. There's the normal fever, then the intense fever that causes someone to speak in delirium, and finally there's the very intense fever that renders a person unconscious. In any case, whatever al-Dabbāgh has to say on these and similar matters is for the most part confirmed, directly or indirectly, in the learned works of the great religious authorities, as al-Lamaṭī, a religious scholar himself, frequently points out.

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**Chapter One** deals with *ḥadīths* that al-Lamaṭī questioned al-Dabbāgh about. It's by far the longest chapter and contains some subsections that present the greatest difficulty for the modern reader. On the other hand, al-Lamaṭī here records what are perhaps al-Dabbāgh's most ingenious 'systematic' ideas about the unique characteristics the Prophet Muḥammad possessed which rendered him capable of transmitting the divine word. The first *ḥadīth*, which is dealt with in section [1], represents the Prophet as appearing before some Companions with a book in each of his hands and declaring that the books contain the names of all the people who will enter Paradise and all the people who will enter Hell. Al-Lamaṭī asks how so many names could be contained in two books. Al-Dabbāgh's answer is that the names aren't written out individually, but the Prophet, by means of his deeper vision, sees an image of the names projected onto the paper's surface. The small can contain the large, the way the pupil of the eye, which is smaller than a lentil, can contain huge images such as the image of the sky.

Section [2] is the lengthiest treatment of any single subject in the *Ibrīz* (pp. 205-306). Ostensibly, it's an explanation of the *ḥadīth*: 'This Qur'ān has been sent down upon seven letters (*aḥruf*)'. In fact, the question provides al-Dabbāgh with the opportunity to present a theosophical construct that appears to be an original, fantastical analysis of the Prophet Muḥammad's superhuman faculties. Al-Dabbāgh hereby contributes to the development of the complex of ideas associated with the cult of the Prophet. After al-Lamaṭī asks him about the meaning of the *ḥadīth*, al-Dabbāgh has a meeting with the Prophet and on the following day sets forth the answer as we find it presented in our text.

In the briefest outline, the 'letters' referred to are lights, i.e. qualities with which the Prophet's body has been imbued to an immeasurably greater degree than that found in any other human being. Specifically, they consist of the letter of prophethood (*nubuwwa*), the letter of apostleship (*risāla*), the letter of Adamhood (*ādamiyya*), the letter of the spirit (*rūḥ*), the letter of science (*ʿilm*), the letter of contraction (*qabḍ*), and the letter of expansion (*baṣṭ*). Al-Dabbāgh explains that individual Qur'ānic verses contain a sign of the presence of one of these letters. For instance, the sign of the letter of prophethood in a verse is that the verse commands patience, indicates the truth and causes disdain for the world and its lusts. The sign of the letter of apostleship is that the verse refers to the realm of the hereafter, its degrees and the stations of its inhabitants, makes mention of their reward and other such subjects. He goes through all seven letters in this way and distinguishes different categories of Qur'ānic verses on the basis of the seven 'letters'. Some Qur'ānic scholars had said that the letters referred to in the *ḥadīth* refer to letters of the alphabet that occur at the beginning of certain surahs of the Qur'ān. Still other scholars had said that the 'letters' mentioned in the *ḥadīth* refer to different methods of pronunciation when reciting the Qur'ān. But these explanations are rejected by al-Dabbāgh as being very limited in scope.

Next al-Dabbāgh proceeds to explain that each of the seven letters possesses seven 'parts'. This is the core of his elaborate treatment of the theme (pp. 212-45). He begins by explaining the seven parts of Adamhood. For instance, the third part consists of the perfection of the beauty of internal form: the heart has a marvelous form, the liver has a perfect shape; the brain, the blood vessels and all the internal organs are in a state of perfect

balance. And al-Dabbāgh elaborates six other parts or subdivisions of Adamhood along similar lines, and then does the same for each of the remaining six 'letters'. The description of the parts of the spirit (pp. 223-32), culminating in the Prophet's spirit, and then the description of the parts of science (pp. 232-39), are particularly interesting. In each case he points out that the Prophet had the greatest amount or degree of each of these parts of all the letters. Thus the sense of the *ḥadīth* is that the Qur'ān could only have been sent down to someone who possessed these characteristics and faculties, and of course in reality no one was endowed with these qualities to the extent that the Prophet was. Finally, on page 244, al-Lamaṭī remarks: 'Let's count these parts [once more], for this is useful...' As a kind of table of contents at the end, he provides a list of all the parts of the letters he's been discussing before then moving on to the next subject, namely how each letter of the alphabet possesses one part of the parts of the 'internal letters (*aḥruf*)'. What follows next (pp. 248-53) is an explanation of how the three special letters *alif*, *wāw* and *yā*, which can be lengthened in pronunciation up to six degrees, also possess in each degree parts from the parts of the 'letters' as previously discussed.

Pp. 253-67 deal with the thorny question of the *rasm* of the Qur'ān, i.e. the strokes that primarily represent the consonants in the written text. In traditional, learned discussions different problems arise from the fact that the *rasm* (loosely speaking the spelling) is not always consistent (*qiyāsī*). In certain cases the same word may appear with two different spellings. Al-Dabbāgh's position is that the smallest deviations from 'standard' spelling and other such irregularities all contain a secret and therefore certainly mustn't be changed. The text of the Qur'ān as we have it is as the Prophet wished it to be written, i.e. it's fixed (*tawqīfī*). Other scholars have held different views on this subject. What al-Bāqillānī wrote is quoted at length and vigorously rejected. Likewise, the saying attributed to 'Uthmān that: 'In the text of the Qur'ān there's mistaken usage (*lahn*) which the Arabs correct with their tongues' is discussed in this connection (from page 264). Numerous examples of inconsistencies in writing are cited from the Qur'ān which will be tedious for the modern reader to follow.

Pp. 267-70 continue the discussion of the 'letters' by indicating how the vowels in the Qur'ān's words belong to particular 'letters', e.g. *u* and the absence of a vowel belong to contraction,

pronouncing *a* belongs to apostleship, *i* belongs to Adamhood, and so on. The next section (pp. 270-80) presents the practical exercise of interpreting the letters and vowels that occur in the *Fātiḥa* on the basis of all that's been explained about the parts of the 'letters'. This as well is a rather burdensome section for the modern reader, whereas students of Qur'ānic recitation (*qirā'a*) in the traditional *madrasas* would presumably find the detailed interpretations more interesting since they have a bearing on topics that were given serious attention in the study curriculum. And al-Dabbāgh goes on to apply his system of interpretation even to the non-canonical readings of the *Fātiḥa*, i.e. known deviations in pronunciation or vocalization by early pious and learned personalities (pp. 280-91).

The subdivision that brings section [2] to a close (pp. 291-306) reviews what's been previously discussed under nine important headings. The ninth heading consists of two further questions that are put to al-Dabbāgh (pp. 296-304). The first question is whether what al-Dabbāgh has said about how the letters of the alphabet belong to the 'letters' referred to in the *ḥadīth* also applies to the occurrence of normal letters in everyday speech. The answer is that such isn't the case. What was explained about the seven 'letters' only applies to the text of the Qur'ān. The second question, which is dealt with at greater length, concerns the problem of reconciling al-Dabbāgh's explanation of the 'letters' with what's found in various *ḥadīths* on this subject. Section [2] then concludes with some remarks by al-Dabbāgh about 'seven letters' understood in the sense of seven different categories that affect how one recites the Qur'ān (pp. 304-06).

Section [3] takes as its point of departure the *ḥadīth*: 'The true dream of an upright man is one of forty-six parts of prophethood' and then sets out on a lengthy discussion of the nature of dreams (pp. 307-62). To begin with al-Lamṭī assembles the variants of this *ḥadīth* which have been transmitted with different numbers: forty-nine parts, forty-seven, forty-four, or twenty-six, twenty-four, twenty-two, or even seventy and seventy-two. He lists a total of fifteen variants and indicates his preference for certain ones. But his question to al-Dabbāgh is: 'What's meant by the parts of prophethood?' Al-Dabbāgh answers by giving an interpretation of the *ḥadīth* on the basis of what he said about the 'internal letters' in section [2]. By juggling with the various 'parts of the seven letters', he's able to give reasons for why the *ḥadīths* attribute varying numbers to the

amount of prophethood contained in the true dream. On page 310 al-Dabbāgh says: 'In reality the dream hinges on removal of Satan's allotment... Whoever has had Satan's allotment removed from him by God, all his thoughts are focused on the good. When he sleeps, he sees the good which engrosses his thought, and his dream is true.'

But then al-Lamaṭī proceeds to examine at some length what other notable scholars have said about this *ḥadīth* or more generally about different categories of dreams. Al-Ḥalīmī, for instance, attempts to confirm the number forty-six in relation to prophethood by presenting a list of forty-six well-known miracles of the Prophet and claiming that the true dream belongs in this group. Al-Lamaṭī gives different reasons for why this explanation is unsatisfactory. For one thing, the *ḥadīth* isn't aimed at the Prophet exclusively but refers to the dream of any upright man. And al-Lamaṭī goes on to review what al-Ghazzālī has said about the *ḥadīth*, as well as the remarks of al-Māzarī, Ibn Baṭṭāl, Ibn Abī Jamra, and others.

From this point on (p. 319) the discussion broadens out. Al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh more generally about the nature of true dreams and false dreams. Then he asks about the dream that brings harm and the dream that's distressing but doesn't actually bring harm. How should one react after waking up? Among other things, someone who experiences such a dream must spit three times on his left and seek refuge with God from Satan. Particular dreams that Joseph experienced or that were about Joseph are discussed, as well as the dream of the woman who dreamt she gave birth to a child who was blind in one eye, etc. Finally five rules are laid down about how to react when one is visited by a distressing dream (p. 324).

Pp. 326-37 discuss the famous dream that Abū Bakr interpreted in the Prophet's presence. The Prophet had said: 'In part you're right and in part you're wrong.' Various alternative interpretations are considered, all of which have different implications concerning important political events that took place in the early history of Islam. In the end, al-Dabbāgh presents the correct interpretation (pp. 331-37) and he explains that the venerable Abū Bakr was distracted from the true interpretation because in the Prophet's presence he was dazzled and overcome by love.

Next al-Lamaṭī goes through a number of explanations that have previously been given by physicians, religious scholars and

famous Islamic thinkers or theosophists about the origin and the nature of dreams (pp. 337-40). Al-Dabbāgh then specifies that dreams are either stray thoughts (*khawāṭir*) or direct perceptions (*idrākāt*), and he explains what these terms mean in relation to dreams (pp. 340-42).

This is followed by a description of the darkness that enters the human body and its ten degrees of intensity. Each degree of darkness is associated with a category of minor or major offense committed by an individual. The ascending degrees of darkness account for the levels of difficulty one encounters in interpreting any particular dream. Examples of dreams of each degree of difficulty are given and interpreted. For instance, the third degree of darkness that enters the body is the result of a person having intentionally committed a reprehensible act. He may have a dream in which he sees satans entering his house. 'The interpretation of the dream is that his wife is an adulteress and men go in unto her. ...the satans in the dream signify fornicators, based on similarity and resemblance. Entering signifies sexual intercourse. The house signifies the wife.'

The counterpart of al-Dabbāgh's 'theory' of the degrees of darkness is his explanation of the ten degrees of purity of vision. Before he presents a description of the ten degrees of purity, al-Dabbāgh notes: 'Know that when the spirit sees a dream by means of its deeper vision and its pure vision, it sees it the way it really is, without change and alteration.' But if there's darkness in someone's body, distortion occurs when the spirit conveys the dream to the sleeping person's body.

On the other hand, the dreams of prophets aren't like other people's dreams. Their dreams are divided into one of two categories, direct sight (*mu'āyana*) or revelation. Revelation, however, requires interpretation. Examples are given from the attested dreams of the Prophet Muḥammad. Prophets possess a higher form of vision (*mushāhada*) which allows them to understand the sense behind the things they see in their dreams. 'This was the case with Joseph's dream—peace be upon him! He experienced a vision of God the Sublime when he slept and beheld the stars, the sun and the moon, because his spirit ascended to the heavens...' Beholding natural phenomena within God's creation with special higher vision allows prophets to perceive revelation that God intends for them.

Generally speaking, what accounts for the diversity found in various types of dreams is the difference between the stray

thoughts that occur in different bodies. But this is a concealed, supernatural matter (*ghaybī*). In reality, it comes down to God's action in the heart of His bondsmen. Indeed, all men's actions come from stray thoughts that God sends to them, and this is a continuous process that occurs in a person's heart in the form of dreams when he's asleep.

Pp. 359-62 discuss specifically dreams in which the Prophet appears. The meaning of such dreams may be clear. Moreover, a dreamer who's received illumination sees the Prophet's real body, whereas ordinary people see an image of the Prophet, for the Prophet is capable of taking on innumerable images. But in ordinary people the degree of darkness in their body affects their dream involving the Prophet. Al-Dabbāgh explains how to recognize six degrees of darkness that can affect a dream in which the Prophet appears.

Al-Dabbāgh concludes section [3] by noting that the science of dream interpretation depends on 1) knowing the circumstances of the dreamer, i.e. whether he's a religious scholar, a grocer, a bedouin, etc. And it depends on 2) knowledge of the dreamer's internal circumstances, e.g. whether his spirit with all its parts has assisted his body, how the secret of reason was installed in his body, what thoughts occupy the dreamer's mind, and so on. 'I saw in a dream that I drank honey' can be interpreted a hundred different ways in view of these numerous considerations.

From section [4] to [33] at the end of the chapter the sections are shorter. For the most part they present al-Dabbāgh's solution to an apparent problem or ambiguity in well-known *ḥadīths*. Section [4] gives an original explanation concerning: 'Worship God as if you see Him.' The *ḥadīth*'s real meaning is criticism directed against the hypocrites. One must worship with the same genuine humility that a sincere beggar displays before a rich man's door. There must be no play-acting involved, as in the case of someone who stretches out his arm and makes a fist, and pretends to be shooting a gun.

Section [5] offers an interpretation of the *ḥadīth*: 'I looked at the sins of my community and I saw no sin greater than when a man is given a Qur'ānic verse and he then forgets it.' Al-Tirmidhī and al-Bukhārī maintain that its *isnād* is defective but al-Dabbāgh says it's a sound *ḥadīth* because he sees the light that emanates from it. Al-Dabbāgh then speaks about the different lights that a Qur'ānic verse contains: the light that points to God,



the light of obeying the Qur'ān's commands, and the light of avoiding what it prohibits.

Section [6] deals with the *ḥadīth*: 'Paradise and Hell-fire had an argument. Hell-fire said: "I've been entrusted with the high and mighty." Paradise replied: "What's that to me? Only the weak and the dregs among the people are admitted unto me."' Al-Lamaṭī asks why Paradise didn't mention the noble and the excellent among its people, they being the prophets and the apostles. Al-Dabbāgh replies that everyone of Paradise's inhabitants sees no one among God's creatures as more needy than himself and sees himself as the weakest and poorest of the people and the most in need of God.

[7] 'When at the beginning of revelation Gabriel...was late in coming to the chief of existence...the Prophet ascended to the top of a mountain and wanted to throw himself down because of longing to meet Gabriel.' Al-Lamaṭī says: 'Throwing oneself from a mountain top is suicide, and that's a grave sin.' Al-Dabbāgh explains that in beginning periods the spirit has dominance over the body, and existing things are all one and the same to the spirit. The spirit sits cross-legged in the air just as it sits cross-legged on the ground, and it sleeps in the air just as a person sleeps lying in a bed. Moreover, even if the Prophet did throw himself from a mountain, he wouldn't feel any pain from it, much less be killed by the fall.

[8] 'God the Sublime comes to the believers at the waiting place of the Resurrection in a form they don't recognize and they seek refuge with God from Him, saying: "This is our place until our Lord comes to us and if He comes to us, we'll recognize Him." Then their Lord comes to them in a form they recognize, and they throw themselves down before Him.' Al-Lamaṭī asks: 'What's the meaning of the first and the second form?' Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'When God appears in the first form, His speech is without the lights of compassion and tenderness that are reserved for one's beloved. In His second form special lights are present and the beloved believers recognize Him, while the hypocrites and enemies do not.'

[9] 'The heart of God's bondsman is between two fingers of the Compassionate One.' To begin with al-Dabbāgh says 'finger' is allegorical and stands for action. Here it refers to the action of the spirit and the action of the body. Al-Lamaṭī replies: 'The religious scholars...explain the two actions as intervention of an angel and the intervention of Satan.' Al-Dabbāgh goes on to say:

‘The angel and Satan are two secondary contingencies. What we’re explaining is the root. And that is that every body, a pure body or one that isn’t pure, has stray thoughts and these stray thoughts are what causes salvation or eternal damnation... The matter of stray thoughts is immense and their significance momentous.’

[10] ‘The Black Stone is God’s right hand on His earth.’ Al-Dabbāgh says: ‘Whoever wishes to enter the sanctuary, the majesty, and the protection of a king hastens to kiss the king’s right hand. Similarly, whoever wishes to enter God’s mercy and His shelter, let him kiss the Black Stone.’

[11] ‘Death is brought in the form of a ram and is then sacrificed.’ Al-Dabbāgh comments: ‘When the people arrive in Paradise, they talk, especially during the first days, about what happened in the world and especially about the pain of death. For this reason, God...confers on them delight and happiness by sacrificing death in the form of a ram, and what’s sacrificed is an angel.’

[12] Al-Lamaṭī says: ‘And I heard al-Dabbāgh...talk about the *ḥadīths* which mention the pebbles that glorify God, the yearning of the tree trunk, the stone’s greeting, the prostration of the trees, and other things like this from among the Prophet’s miracles... I asked him: “Are these objects endowed with life and a spirit?” He replied: “No, they’re not. But all created beings, those with speech and those that are mute, if asked about their creator, will reply with clear speech: ‘It’s God Who has created me!’ ...They’re inanimate in our eyes but with relation to their Creator...they have knowledge of Him.”’ And al-Dabbāgh then describes some of his own experiences involving stones, fish, and other animals whose language he could hear and understand.

[13] ‘The Israelites said to Moses: “Describe for us the word of the Lord of glory and what it was like to hear it.” He replied: “I heard the sound of thunder and lightning bolts that straightway kill as if they were the sweetest delight. Such is the word of God.”’ And Moses asks God whether He spoke to him with His full voice. God replies: ‘I spoke to you with the power of ten thousand tongues. If I’d spoken to you with My full speech, you’d have immediately been dissolved.’ But how could Moses distinguish all ten thousand voices without the sounds becoming confused? Al-Dabbāgh explains that: ‘This is the hearing of the spirit, not the hearing of the body...the science of the spirit doesn’t contain ordered succession. If, for example, the spirit

directs its attention to a particular science such as grammar or jurisprudence, all the latter's questions are present unto the spirit in one instant.'

[14] 'Gabriel was only concealed from me this time.' Al-Dabbāgh explains that: '...the Prophet's body...on certain occasions may experience immersion while beholding God...and his body with...all its veins and bodily parts, and the floods of its light, becomes absorbed in the light of God the Sublime... If the angels see that this state has come over the Prophet...and they know he won't recognize them...they appear before him disguised as bedouins and hasten to exploit the state. They ask him questions about faith and acquire faith from him, and they take him as their authoritative guide (shaykh) regarding faith.' Al-Lamaʿi asks: 'Why do they only ask him questions when he's in this state?' Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'If he has returned to his senses...and recognizes them as angels...it's not really possible to present themselves as bedouins, so that the answer comes forth for them from his noble body with his light and his assistance.'

[15] 'Every prophet was given some [miracles] on the basis of which human beings would acquire faith. But what I've been given is revelation which is recited.' The Prophet's unique miracle is the degree of his spiritual perfection and the revelation he received. When he reached the age of forty, the curtain between the body and the spirit disappeared and the veil between them vanished. In that state he realized that all man's actions come from God the Mover (*muḥarrik*). Therefore, he didn't invoke God against them so they might perish, the way the prophets before him had done to their communities. Al-Dabbāgh adds: '...our Prophet's invocation...has been deferred as intercession until the Day of Resurrection. Thus his invocation is mercy upon mercy...'

[16] 'By God, I will not provide you with mounts. I have no mounts with me to give you.' But then the Prophet contradicted himself and did give them riding mounts. Al-Dabbāgh explains that whatever the Prophet utters he utters in one of three states of vision (*mushāhada*). He may be experiencing vision of the Lofty Essence or vision of the fearsome power of divine Essence or vision of divine power as diffused throughout contingent things. In the first and second vision he's absent from himself and such was the case when he gave the above answer to the Ashʿarites. When he then came back to his senses and appeared to be acting

differently by giving them gifts, it was in fact God acting through him.

[17] Again al-Dabbāgh discusses the effect that the three degrees of vision have on whatever the Prophet utters, this time in relation to the *ḥadīth*: ‘Should I swear an oath but then see something better than it, I renounce my oath and do what’s better.’ With the help of similitudes, al-Dabbāgh gives more detailed descriptions of the three visionary states that come over the Prophet, as well as the intense pleasure he experiences.

[18] In a *ḥadīth* which isn’t cited verbatim, the Prophet sees some people pollinating palm-trees. He asks them why they’re doing this and they reply that it makes the dates turn out better. The Prophet then says: ‘If you didn’t do it, they’d turn out well.’ They followed his advice and the dates produced were of bad quality. It seems the Prophet was wrong. The Prophet then says in the *ḥadīth*: ‘You know better how to deal with your worldly affairs.’ Al-Dabbāgh explains that what the Prophet said is true with regard to higher reality, since it’s God Who makes everything happen. ‘Not one mote comes to rest, not one hair moves, no heart beats, no vein pulsates, no eye blinks and no eyebrow makes a sign without God the Sublime being the agent behind it—directly and without any intermediary.’ But since the Prophet was aware that ordinary people can’t remove secondary causes, he said: ‘You know better...’

[19] ‘When the call to prayer is sounded, Satan takes flight and breaks wind.’ Al-Dabbāgh said that Satan: ‘...flees because when the call to prayer comes forth from a pure body, its light fills all the empty space that the sound of the call to prayer reaches. Light is cold, whereas Satan was created from the smokeless flame of a fire. And cold and fire are opposites.’

[20] ‘In the presence of my Lord I didn’t want Him to give me food and drink.’ Al-Dabbāgh notes that the Prophet said this with reference to being in the presence of God during his ascension. And he adds that prophets feel hunger and need food. Their earthen bodies can’t be sustained solely by tasting lights.

Section [21] is the first in a series of eight sections that deal with reports about the physical appearance and personal circumstances of the Prophet. [21] presents the words of Fāṭima al-Thaqafiyya who said: ‘I witnessed the birth of the Prophet...and I saw the house in which his birth took place fill with light and I saw the stars draw so near I thought they were about to fall on me.’ This leads to a discussion of whether his

birth took place at night or early dawn when stars are still visible. Al-Dabbāgh points out that: '...the space of time between his being separated from his mother's womb...and the expulsion of the placenta is the moment when prayers are answered in the night.' It's also the moment when the Dīwān of the Friends of God convenes in the Cave of Ḥirā<sup>3</sup> outside Mecca (see Chpt. Four).

In [22] al-Lamaṭī reviews opinions about which month the Prophet's birth took place in. Al-Dabbāgh asserts with precision that the Prophet was born on the seventh of Rabī<sup>c</sup> al-Awwal.

In [23] al-Lamaṭī considers various opinions about the year of the Prophet's birth. Al-Dabbāgh specifies: '...he was born in the Year of the Elephant before the elephant's arrival, and through the blessing of his presence in Mecca...God drove off the elephant from Mecca's inhabitants.'

Section [24] deals with the question of whether the Prophet had hair under his noble armpits. Al-Dabbāgh explains that: 'The noble armpits had no hair that could be plucked but they contained something very small which was *ʿufra*, i.e. whiteness mixed with a little black.'

In [25] al-Dabbāgh confirms that the Prophet didn't have eyebrows that were joined together. And as far as the Prophet's way of walking, al-Dabbāgh gives al-Lamaṭī a demonstration. Al-Lamaṭī remarks: '...I saw how he swayed to the right and the left. I beheld a walk which was so fine and beautiful that I almost lost my reason.'

In [26] the Prophet's beard is described as: '...thick throughout its length, of medium length at the chin, and rather thin where the cheeks meet with the chin.'

Section [27] presents what al-Dabbāgh knows about the Prophet's hair. He didn't shave his head and he only dyed his hair with henna on rare occasions. As for the use of the depilatory cream *nawra*, he used it on his midriff. Khadīja and ʿĀ'isha applied *nawra* on him.

In [28] al-Lamaṭī asks how many times the Prophet's chest was split open so the angels could cleanse his heart. Al-Dabbāgh answers: 'Three times. 1) While he was with Ḥalīma [his wet nurse]... 2) When he was ten years old... 3) When he'd become a prophet.' Al-Lamaṭī discusses what different religious scholars have said on the matter.

Section [29] contains what al-Dabbāgh had to say about the Prophet's fingers and toes. For instance, his index finger was

longer than his middle finger, and the second toe of his foot was longer than his middle toe, etc.

In [30] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the three times Gabriel embraced the Prophet. When Gabriel brought the Prophet God's command to recite the Qur'ān and the Prophet replied: 'I'm not able to recite', Gabriel embraced him with all his might. This was in order to bring the Prophet before God to obtain God's contentment with him. The second embrace was so Gabriel would be included in the Prophet's dignity and find refuge in his protection. And finally, the third embrace was so Gabriel would belong to the Prophet's noble community.

In the *ḥadīth* dealt with in [31] the Prophet speaks of the time when the Companions will all have passed away. 'There you [all] are this night of yours! [But after a hundred years no one who is now on the face of the earth will be left.]' And al-Dabbāgh knows that the Prophet said these words only a short time before his own demise.

In [32] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh whether the above *ḥadīth* provides proof against anyone who claimed to be a Companion after the end of that time span. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'The Companions can't be encompassed... But the *ḥadīth* is question is general and refers especially to those who were famous...and widely known.'

In [33] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the legendary Rajrāja who are meant to be Berbers who visited the Prophet during his lifetime. The Prophet supposedly spoke to them in Berber. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'They weren't Companions. ...there isn't one of the Companions in the West.'

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**Chapter Two** is devoted to al-Dabbāgh's interpretations of Qur'ānic passages which pose some difficulty in al-Lamaṭī's eyes. Likewise, an elaborate explanation of the Syriac language (Suryāniyya) is given which extends from section [10] to [15]. And then the mysterious letters of the alphabet that appear at the beginning of certain surahs are interpreted by al-Dabbāgh.

Section [1] explains the puzzling reference to Adam and Eve in: 'And when He gave them a righteous son, they attributed partners unto Him with regard to what He had given them. But God is exalted above what they associate with Him' (7/190). Al-Lamaṭī asks how someone who's a prophet and God's beloved could attribute partners unto God. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'This is

blaming the parents for what sons and descendants have done.' In other words, at a later time the offspring of Adam weren't always sincere monotheists.

In [2] al-Lamaṭī cites what the angels said to God with reference to Adam: 'Will You place on earth someone who will perpetrate corruption there and shed blood, whereas we proclaim Your praise and sanctify You?' (2/30). Al-Lamaṭī remarks that this was a form of calumny, whereas the angels are meant to be protected from sin. Al-Dabbāgh replies that it wasn't calumny. It's as if they said: 'One who's veiled doesn't recognize Your worth and disobeys Your command.' Their words are in accordance with their limited understanding. The angels were unaware of the special knowledge God intended to confer on man. 'And He taught Adam the names, all of them' (2/32).

In [3] al-Lamaṭī asks whether all the angels are meant in the above Qur'ānic verse or only the angels of the earth. 'Only the angels of the earth', replies al-Dabbāgh. And he proceeds to comment on the meaning of the word *khalīfa* (deputy) with which God designated Adam. The characteristics of a *khalīfa* include autocratic behavior, planning rather than trust in God, etc., all of which comprise man's ruin and his death. From the word *khalīfa* the angels had concluded that any descendant of Adam would be veiled from God.

In [4] al-Lamaṭī asks about the meaning of: 'And follow the best (*aḥsān*) of what's been sent down to you from your Lord' (39/53). The words seem to imply that some parts of the Qur'ān are not the best. Al-Lamaṭī reviews what certain religious scholars have said about the passage. Al-Dabbāgh explains that what's meant is: '...follow the best book and the best apostle that's been sent down to you from your Lord. And the best book...is the Qur'ān and the best apostle...is the Prophet.'

In [5] al-Lamaṭī asks why in different Qur'ānic verses 'hearing' is given preference over sight and seeing, as for instance: 'And He created for you hearing and eyes...' (16/78) or 'He produced for you hearing and eyes' (23/78), etc. Normally, sight is considered more useful than hearing. Al-Lamaṭī lists the benefits of sight. Moreover, without sight one can't see the miracles of God's creation, such as the sky raised on high without columns and ornamented with the stars. Al-Dabbāgh explains that, without hearing, the religious law, revelation and all the hidden things we must believe in wouldn't have been able to reach us. '...if the offspring of Adam had no hearing, the obligation to observe the

precepts of religion would disappear. They'd be on the level of animals.'

In [6] al-Lamaṭī asks about the meaning of the Qur'ānic verses: 'Those who when they do a vile deed or wrong themselves (their souls)...' (3/135) and 'Whoever does evil or wrongs himself (his soul)...' (4/110). Al-Dabbāgh explains that before Islam the Arabs would declare a wrongdoer to be innocent and dispute among themselves even when they knew he was guilty. The vile deed is what's done by a sinner, whereas the one who wrongs himself (his soul) is a person who denies the wrongdoer's sin and bears false witness. It then turns out that miraculously al-Dabbāgh had just heard this explanation from Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm who was in the city of Baṣra.

Section [7] deals with: 'And he attached to them the word godfearing which they are more entitled to and are worthy of' (48/26). Al-Lamaṭī asks what the sense is behind 'more entitled to' and 'worthy of'. Al-Dabbāgh replies that in the case of certain people it refers to God's pre-eternal decree before creation and how this affects them.

In [8] al-Dabbāgh, on the basis of his direct vision and unveiling, clarifies various aspects of the confused information that's been handed down about the legendary people the 'Ād who are referred to in the Qur'ān. For instance, he explains the difference between the first and the second 'Ād, the prophets Hūd and Huwayd, etc.

In [9] al-Dabbāgh explains that there's no substantial difference between David and Solomon in rendering legal judgements. David's judgement was based on witnesses and the principle of compensation, whereas Solomon sought to bring about accommodation between the parties in dispute. Some have thought Solomon was wiser, but both judges are equally correct, even though they followed different legal procedures. Several of the cases they presided over are described in detail.

Sections [10] to [16] present a series of discussions that treat different aspects of what al-Dabbāgh calls the Syriac language. Section [10] begins by discussing words such as *sāq*, *Mashikhā*, *injīl*, *shafaḥ*, etc., which are found in Arabic but come from Syriac. We learn that al-Dabbāgh knows all existing languages, including Syriac and the language of the Jinn, the angels and the animals. Al-Lamaṭī tells al-Dabbāgh about a man from Tlemcen who while on the pilgrimage to Mecca stopped at the shrine of the famous saint Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī in Egypt. The saint appeared



to him and conferred on him a prayer in Syriac. Al-Dabbāgh explains what the words mean. In fact, Syriac is the language of the spirits and the Friends of God who are members of the Dīwān. Syriac was the language of Adam in Paradise and is the most compact of languages because its letters by themselves are like words that communicate numerous meanings at once. Only those human beings who have received the great illumination can speak it. All the other languages in the world were derived from Syriac after the death of Idrīs (Enoch). The speech of breast-feeding babies and small children preserves words from Syriac. Examples are: *ugh*, *būbū*, *‘a‘a*, *mūmū*, etc. Finally, the angels who carry out the interrogation in the grave speak in Syriac. Al-Dabbāgh informs us of the Syriac words they use, the exact meaning of the words, and what the believer replies as an answer in Syriac.

Section [11] discusses whether the words that religious scholars disagree about in the Qurʾān may be Syriac. Examples given include: *asfāran*, *al-rabbāniyyūn*, *hayta laka*, *jannāt*, *rahwan*, etc. Al-Dabbāgh explains that it took him a month to learn Syriac at the beginning of his illumination (1125/1713). He learned Syriac from Sayyidī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh who preceded him in the Dīwān as the Support. But al-Dabbāgh is a good teacher and succeeds in teaching Syriac to al-Lamaṭī in one day.

In [12] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the view that every word in the Qurʾān has an external and an internal aspect. Al-Dabbāgh says this is true and adds that one can understand the internal aspect if one knows Syriac and the secrets of the letters. He explains the internal aspect of: ‘If the sun becomes rolled up’ (81/1) and ‘The hypocrites are in the lowest level of Hell-fire’ (4/145).

In [13] al-Dabbāgh says that part of what’s written on the Well-guarded Tablet is in Syriac (though most of it is in Arabic). Which part is in Syriac? ‘The opening letters of the surahs.’

Section [14] presents a more lengthy and detailed explanation of the letters that occur at the beginning of certain surahs. These letters are in Syriac. Although some letters and groups of letters repeat at the opening of different surahs, their meanings are different in each case, providing, as they do, a resumé of the surah that follows. For example, *alif-lām-mīm* occurs at the beginning of *The Cow* as well as *The House of ‘Imrān*. Al-Dabbāgh explains what these letters mean, as well as *ṣād* and *kāf-hā’-yā’* - *‘ayn-ṣād*, etc. Al-Lamaṭī then reviews what other

religious scholars have said about these opening letters, scholars such as al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī, Muḥammad b. Sulṭān and Zarrūq. But al-Lamaṭī concludes that al-Dabbāgh's explanations are more penetrating since he can see directly what's on the Well-guarded Tablet.

In [15] al-Dabbāgh presents a complete explanation of the meaning of every letter (consonant) in the Syriac language (pp. 451-57). He ends by telling al-Lamaṭī three words in Syriac which al-Lamaṭī can now understand. The words inform him that al-Dabbāgh is capable of exercising the supernatural power of free disposal within all the worlds.

In [16] al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh about: 'And that God may know who are the believers and take witnesses from you' (3/140) and 'Verily, We will test you so as to know...' (47/31). These verses seem to indicate that God acquires new knowledge, whereas God's knowledge is eternal. Al-Dabbāgh explains that the Qur'ān has been sent down in accordance with how people commonly use speech. And the verses certainly don't refer to new knowledge.

In [17] al-Lamaṭī presents a detailed discussion of 'the matter of the cranes'. This refers to words Satan is supposed to have inserted into the Prophet's speech. The Qur'ānic commentator °Iyāḍ denies the whole story, whereas Ibn Ḥajar confirms it. The episode is reported by different authorities that Ibn Ḥajar accepts as sound but °Iyāḍ rejects. Al-Dabbāgh explains that °Iyāḍ is right to reject the story. The pertinent views of other religious scholars are considered.

In [18] al-Lamaṭī deals briefly with another disagreement between °Iyāḍ and Ibn Ḥajar, this time about the story of the angels Hārūt and Mārūt. °Iyāḍ rejects the story, whereas Ibn Ḥajar and al-Suyūṭī transmit *ḥadīths* in support of it.

In [19] the Qur'ānic verse: 'And He sends down from the heavens mountains in which is hail' (24/43) is taken as the starting point for a lengthy discussion of meteorological questions: hail, snow, wind, lightning, etc. Explanations of these natural phenomena by various scholars are considered in connection with what al-Dabbāgh says on the subject.

Section [20] continues in a similar vein but deals with the cause of earthquakes and the implosion of land. Also discussed is the 'coccyx' and how it's made from the earth. After the Resurrection men's new bodies, with the navel located on the back, will be fashioned from the coccyx.

Section [21] contains a brief explanation of the Qur'ānic verse: 'Against you shall be dispatched flame of fire and molten brass, and you shall not be given help' (55/35). Al-Dabbāgh takes these words to refer to how Hell-fire will come forth against people during the final gathering.

Section [22] presents a discussion about the meaning of the word *al-sijill* in the Qur'ānic verse: 'On the day when We shall roll up the heavens the way a scroll (*al-sijill*) is rolled up for the writings' (21/104). Various meanings proposed by earlier Qur'ānic commentators are considered. Al-Dabbāgh then explains that the word refers to the implement on which a copyist places the book he's copying from.

In [23] al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh about: 'He [Moses] said: "Oh my Lord, show me so I may behold You!" He [God] replied: "You will not see Me. But behold the mountain. If it remains fixed in its place, then you'll see Me"' (7/143). Al-Lamaṭī notes that Moses was one of the greatest knowers of God, so why would he ask for sight (*ru'ya*) when he had permanent higher vision (*mushāhada*)? Al-Dabbāgh replies that God's action forms a veil between every created thing and the Lofty Essence. Were His action to cease, all existence would collapse the way God caused the mountain to collapse by withdrawing His action from it.

In [24] al-Lamaṭī asks about God's words: 'God eradicates and He establishes whatever He wishes' (13/39). The religious scholars have greatly disagreed about its meaning. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'I'll only explain the verse in accordance with what I heard from the Prophet...who mentioned it to me with its explanation the other day.' Random or stray thoughts that occur are of two kinds. There are those which are about things that actually happen, i.e. are 'established', and those about things that don't happen, i.e. are 'eradicated'.

Section [25] contains an interesting description of what the Friend of God sees after illumination and what his powers are. The section begins with al-Lamaṭī asking about: 'And when the angels said: "Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you..."' (3/43). Was Mary a prophetess since the angels addressed her directly? Al-Dabbāgh answers in the negative and says prophecy is denied to the female gender. Next some important ideas are dealt with about the difference between prophets and Friends of God and what the latter see after experiencing illumination. And dangers are described that someone encounters if he 'halts'

within the heightened perceptions associated with illumination. Such a person is cut off from God and becomes a magician, a fortuneteller or some kind of a miracle-worker. Only when he beholds our lord and master Muḥammad is he out of danger and only then can he know happiness. Toward the end of this section (p. 483) al-Dabbāgh talks about the terrifying appearance of angels, if they appear as they really are (with many heads and hundreds of tongues).

In [26] al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh about: ‘And Dhū’l-Nūn when he went away in anger and thought that We would have no power over him’ (21/87). Dhū’l-Nūn is the prophet Jonah, and al-Dabbāgh explains that he was angry because the people he was sent to didn’t accept him as a prophet, whereas ‘he thought that We would have no power over him’ means he thought God wouldn’t destroy him the way He destroyed the particular people he was sent to.

In [27] al-Lamaṭī asks about: ‘And Job when he called to his Lord: “Adversity has befallen me...”’ (21/83). According to al-Dabbāgh, the adversity which befell Job was that he turned his attention to something other than God the Sublime and was cut off from Him. The illness reported about his body never really existed.

In [28] al-Lamaṭī asks about: ‘Whoever turns away from remembering Me, his livelihood shall be confined and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind’ (20/124). And yet there appear to be many infidels who are rich. Al-Dabbāgh explains that it isn’t their material livelihood that’s restricted but it’s a matter of restrictedness in their heart. A person may be rich but if he knows that God’s wrath will be his final outcome, his livelihood is restricted. The plight of Jews and Christians is examined, and al-Lamaṭī reports that a Muslim jurist who was held captive by the Christians experienced how their leading authorities were aware that Islam is the true religion. Their hearts were sick with doubt.

In [29] al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh about the Qur’ānic verse describing Joseph’s feelings toward Zulaykhā (Potiphar’s wife): ‘And he felt inclined toward her, except he saw the sign of his Lord’ (12/24). ‘What was it he felt inclined to do?’, asks al-Lamaṭī. Al-Dabbāgh answers: ‘He felt inclined to slap her.’ In other words, Joseph didn’t feel lust toward her, since prophets are protected from sin. Indeed, for prophets looking at a woman’s genitals is the same as looking at a stone.

[30] In view of: ‘And God spoke directly to Moses’ (4/164), al-Lamaṭī asks whether what the Sufī masters (Abū’l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī for instance) say is true about God speaking to them. Al-Dabbāgh replies that what Abū’l-Ḥasan and other Sufis report about speaking with God is absolutely true. ‘There’s no part of him, no substance, no tooth, no molar and no single hair that he doesn’t hear with. His whole body becomes like an ear that hears.’

In [31] al-Lamaṭī cites the Qur’ānic verse: ‘And when you’re journeying in the land, there’s no fault in you should you shorten the prayer [if you fear the unbelievers will afflict you]’ (4/101) and asks why fear is specifically mentioned, since it’s allowed to shorten prayers even in a situation of security. Al-Dabbāgh explains that the Prophet was concerned that the Companions, while away on campaign waging holy war, were exhausting themselves staying up all night praying.

In [32] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the implied meaning (*mafḥūm*) of the Prophet’s words: ‘Alms tax is owed for freely grazing sheep.’ Al-Dabbāgh’s immediate answer is that if sheep are sick and can’t graze, they’re not subject to tax. What then follows is a general discussion of ‘implied meaning’ and the difficulty involved in establishing what it is. The authorities on jurisprudence disagree about this question. In the end only the great men who’ve received illumination truly understand the legal restrictions.

In [33] al-Lamaṭī asks about the Qur’ānic verse concerning Abraham: ‘And when night settled over him, he saw a star and said: “This is my Lord”’ (6/76). Was this a deduction on Abraham’s part so as to ascend to the truth or was it a way of reproaching the people and declaring their view false? Al-Dabbāgh replies that Abraham wanted to see with his physical eyes what he was able to see with his deeper vision (i.e. God). It was a deduction, but the deductions of prophets aren’t like those of other human beings. Prophets are protected even from minor sins. In the same way, the Friend of God who’s received illumination can tell the moment at night when Ramaḍān has ended. He only leaves the house to seek the new moon by way of keeping company with ordinary people.

In [34] al-Lamaṭī cites: ‘It is He Who has sent His apostle with guidance and the true religion in order to render it victorious over every religion...’ (61/9) and he asks: ‘What’s meant by rendering it victorious over every religion?’ Al-Dabbāgh replies that Islam

has been victorious over all religions in every respect. If a person with illuminated vision looks at the face of the earth, at this continent (North Africa) as well as the continent of unbelief (Europe), he'll see everywhere people who follow the religion of Muḥammad. And Islam contains a light which prevents the community of the faithful from falling into apostasy and unbelief. The commands of Islam open doors of light and the prohibitions block the doors of darkness.

In [35] al-Lamaṭī asks about the Qur'ānic verse: 'And some of them have made a covenant with God: "If He bestow on us of His bounty, we will give alms and be among the righteous"' (9/75). According to the commentators this refers to Tha'labā b. Ḥaṭīb. He asked the Prophet to beseech God to bestow worldly goods on him. But once he became rich, Tha'labā was too busy to perform the prayers and was reluctant to pay the alms tax. However, al-Dabbāgh says that he 'looked' and didn't see anyone among the Companions who'd committed a sin like this. Consequently, he doesn't accept the story.

[36] In connection with: 'And when your Lord took from the offspring of Adam their progeny from their loins' (7/172), al-Lamaṭī asks: 'Did this take place in the world of spirits or was it when God created Adam that He brought forth from his loins his progeny and installed in them reason and capacity for speech...?' Or is this an illustrative metaphor? Al-Dabbāgh replies that the story took place in the world of spirits. He explains that God summoned all the spirits before they entered their bodies and removed the veil from them. They were divided according to the strength and weakness of their lights. Their true character was then revealed. Some were infidels, some were believers, and there were spiritual masters and disciples among them. Eventually, three different categories of spirits descended to earth in three different locations: the land of believers, the land of infidels, and a place where both are mixed together. Someone with illuminated vision can look at a place and tell whether believers or infidels will live there in the future.

[37] With the brothers of Joseph in mind, al-Lamaṭī asks whether prophets are protected from sin before prophethood as well as after it. Al-Dabbāgh answers in the affirmative that they're protected both before and after prophethood. As for the bad things Joseph's brothers did, they were ordered in their interior by God to do them. Their being reproached is only on

the level of appearances. And al-Dabbāgh proceeds to develop this idea.

In [38] al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh about: ‘You’re afraid of the people, whereas God has a greater claim for you to fear Him’ (33/37). The Prophet is the lord of the knowers of God and chief of the prophets and apostles. How could God reproach him like this? Al-Dabbāgh replies that the Prophet reproached himself with these words when Zayd consulted him about divorcing Zaynab. On that occasion the Prophet told Zayd not to divorce her, though he already knew that she was going to belong to him in the future. No doubt this was because he was concerned about what people would think.

In [39] al-Dabbāgh explains the Qur’ānic verse: ‘God forgive you! Why did you give them permission before it was clear to you which of them spoke the truth and you knew which were liars?’ (9/43). Firstly, the Prophet, like anyone who receives illumination today, was able to tell the difference between liars and those who speak the truth. In this case he simply acted out of mercy. Secondly, the expression ‘God forgive you!’ in no way implies that the Prophet had committed a sin. In fact, the expression is regularly used as a token of esteem. Other examples of its use in the latter sense are presented.

In [40] al-Lamaṭī asks whether the words: ‘We never punish until We have sent forth an apostle’ (17/15) refer to punishment that occurs in the present world, such as the earth swallowing up someone, or to punishment in the hereafter. Al-Dabbāgh replies that punishment in the hereafter doesn’t depend on an apostle being sent to a people, otherwise no one from Gog and Magog would enter Hell-fire. And they constitute the greater part of those who’ll inhabit Hell.

In [41] al-Lamaṭī asks what the sense is behind the Qur’ānic verse: ‘Your companion is not possessed’ (81/22). Al-Dabbāgh explains how it reflects the prevailing state of humility in the Prophet’s body on that occasion. It also indicates confirmation of the words that had just preceded.

In [42] al-Lamaṭī says that Shu‘ayb’s words: ‘It isn’t for us to return to it except if God our Lord so wills’ (7/89) express an exception. Al-Lamaṭī asks what this exception means, since an exception necessarily implies doubt and lack of certainty. Al-Dabbāgh replies that in this case an exception is pure recourse to God and as such amounts to pure faith. Indeed, the prophets and the Friends of God who’ve received illumination know that what

appears as actions on their part is really God acting through their bodies.

In [43] al-Lamaṭī cites the Qur'ānic verse: 'By the star when it sinks, your comrade has not strayed nor has he erred' (53/1-2) and asks why the Prophet swears by a star that his apostleship is true. After all, a star is only a stone among other stones. What relationship is there between the star and the light of apostleship? Al-Dabbāgh replies that the star's light of truth is the light of right guidance in the darkness of land and sea. And al-Lamaṭī asks: 'What's the meaning of: "...when it sinks"?' Al-Dabbāgh says when the star declines from the middle of the sky, the particular direction in which it declines provides guidance.

[44] In connection with: 'Verily, We have given you a clear victory (*fath*) so that God may forgive you your former and your latter sins' (48/1-2), al-Dabbāgh explains that victory means vision (*mushāhada*) which involves God removing the veil that hinders one from seeing directly that all one's actions are created by God. This vision varies in intensity. No one ever possessed the vision that the Prophet possessed. 'Sin' in the verse refers to the veil of unawareness and the darkness inherent in the earthen body. 'Former' and 'latter' refer to the complete disappearance of the veil as in the Prophet's exceptional case. Other opinions about the verse are discussed.

In [45] al-Lamaṭī questions al-Dabbāgh about the two Qur'ānic verses: 'Who knows the Unseen and does not disclose His Unseen to anyone' (72/26) and 'Verily, God has knowledge of the Hour' (31/34), as well as the *ḥadīth*: 'There are five things which only God knows.' How can their meaning be reconciled with what God reveals to His Friends by way of unveilings and information about what's hidden inside women's wombs and other well-known thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends? Al-Dabbāgh replies that the restriction indicated in God's words and the *ḥadīth* is only meant to exclude soothsayers, fortunetellers and anyone with a supporter among the Jinn. The ignorant Arabs believed the latter had knowledge of the Unseen. Finally, he points out that verse 72/26 can't be applied to the Prophet since even the high-ranking Friends with 'the power of free disposal' know about such hidden matters.

In [46] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the fact that the Prophet didn't specify precisely when the Night of Power recurs each year. Is this a reason to infer, as some religious scholars have done, that he'd forgotten the exact date? Al-Dabbāgh



becomes angry and insists that since he himself knows the dates when it occurs in different years and many other hidden things as well, the Prophet certainly had knowledge of all of this.

.....  
**Chapter Three** deals with the darkness that enters the bondsmen's bodies and works without their knowing it. Many of the ideas developed in this chapter illustrate the radical, ethical tendency in Sufism that seeks to give greater depth and authenticity to the doctrines and practices of Islam.

Section [1] begins with a parable involving two ways of undertaking work that illustrates the difference between works of the 'dissolute' and works of the 'deprived' (the damned). The acts of worship of the dissolute issue from their bodies without any intention and purpose. What they do and omit to do is out of habit. As for the deprived, their works are done for their own benefit and to attain their own goals. These works only increase a person's distance from God because they're in opposition to the 'secret of the body's reality'. The secret in question is that the human body is 'created by God, fashioned by Him, owned by Him, and not attributed to anyone but Him' and Him alone. In reality a person has no part in the body's actions.

Al-Lamaṭī asks why the *ḥadīths* promise rewards to those who undertake good actions. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīths* don't represent God as saying: 'Do works for yourselves and I'll reward you.' Rather God says: 'Worship Me and be sincere toward Me...' Two examples of devoted worshippers are given to illustrate the correct attitude to be adopted. The one ascetic worships for twenty years but his request is never fulfilled until God has mercy on him and reveals that his expectations have been wrong. He repents and all his wishes are granted. The other worshipper worships for six hundred years on a desert island which miraculously provides for all his needs. When he dies, he takes it for granted that he'll enter Paradise. But God is about to send the man to Hell because of his complacent attitude. God explains that his ascetic life was only possible because of God's bounty. The man repents and is then admitted to Paradise purely out of God's generosity.

Al-Lamaṭī asks which is worse the worship of the dissolute or the worship of the deprived. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the worship of the deprived is preferable. After all, God may eventually inform such a person of his body's reality. A discussion then follows concerning the proper attitude to adopt toward receiving

a reward for good actions. Al-Lamaṭī asks what if one realizes that God is behind all one's actions but one would also like the promised reward. He notes that Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī and al-Qarāfī, in opposition to al-Ghazzālī, maintain that a person with this attitude will receive his recompense and that this form of 'associating partners [with God]' causes no harm. It isn't the same as hypocrisy that nullifies an action. Al-Dabbāgh says Ibn al-ʿArabī and al-Qarāfī are correct and adds further points about being detached from actions.

When it comes to invoking blessings on the Prophet, the person who does so in forgetfulness and with a heart filled with distractions receives a weak recompense. The person who invokes blessings on the Prophet out of love and veneration, and because he knows that the Prophet is the cause of all things and every light is from the Prophet's light—his recompense will be in accordance with the Prophet's lofty station.

[2] Al-Lamaṭī asks whether the Prophet acquires any profit or benefit from our invoking blessings on him. Al-Dabbāgh replies that God didn't prescribe this for us with the intention of benefiting His Prophet. The intention was to benefit us. An example of the wrong approach in this regard is as follows. You see a man recite from the *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* (a famous collection of pious invocations of blessings on the Prophet). But he then imagines he's obtained great benefit for the Prophet. He feels emotionally moved and gives himself over entirely to this mistaken fantasy. Satan brings about the illusion in order to cut him off from God. The only reason for invoking blessings on the Prophet should be the love and veneration one feels for him.

As for recompenses, they do accompany works. Moreover, lights accompany the recompenses, and today in the here and now lights are joined with the body. When the body experiences humility, trembling and weeping, the person with deeper vision (*baṣīra*) knows his work has been accepted and the recompense is of such-and-such an amount. On the other hand, the seeker (student) who travels to acquire religious learning with the purpose of attaining status, influence and worldly possessions, is deprived by God of the light of science. He'll never become firmly established in science because he only seeks it with his exterior.

Section [3] opens with al-Lamaṭī asking: 'Why do people seek help by mentioning the godly (*al-ṣāliḥūn*) and not God...?' And people swear oaths in their name. Al-Dabbāgh explains that the

members of the Dīwān (see Chpt. Four) have seen fit to cause this practice to take root because if a request isn't granted, it's better that the bondsman experiences doubt about a Friend of God rather than about God.

Moreover, an indication of how many people are cut off from God and the great amount of darkness in their bodies is that you observe persons who set out with twenty *mawzūnas* to make a request at the tomb of a Friend of God and, though they encounter people in need along the way, they don't give them the slightest gift. Such persons are only concerned about what they want for themselves from the dead Friend. If his report is reliable, al-Dabbāgh gives us an idea of the level of pious donations made to shrines in Fez when he reports on what was donated during one day in the city. 'As for dinars, eighty dinars were given. As for sheep, there were three hundred and sixty sheep. As for cattle, seventy-two bulls were given. All this was brought forth in one day for the godly. On the other hand, not ten dirhems were brought forth during this day for God the Sublime!'

Having declared that this is one of the causes of separation from God, he then goes on to list a total of twenty major causes of separation. This also includes four bad effects that result from disobeying one's parents, and he then mentions six things that increase one's faith. Resumés like this give some insight into the spiritual priorities and concerns of al-Dabbāgh's milieu in Fez.

Section [3] draws to a close with warnings and explanations concerning sodomy (*luwāṭ*) and fornication. For instance, so many angels fall with a man's semen if it enters the backside—which is not the place for sowing! And fornication is forbidden because it causes severance of lineage, and on the Day of Resurrection people will have immense benefit from kinship ties.

And then al-Dabbāgh describes who will be the most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection, namely the man whom God has given a perfect body, reason, health, an easy livelihood, and yet the man pays no attention to his Lord. He commits sins, finds them pleasant, and doesn't give a thought to God. Such a person longs for his punishment and finds it sweet the way someone with mange finds scratching sweet. 'The more he scratches, the greater is the harm to him.'

Finally, al-Dabbāgh describes the technique for avoiding sin which his shaykh ʿUmar al-Hawwārī recommended. One must visualize 1) the ugliness of the sin, 2) the baseness of your carnal

soul, and 3) God's omnipotence and His forgiveness. A man who previously couldn't stop sinning testifies as to how effective the technique was for him.

Section [4] opens with a discussion of the nature of a mortal sin and a venial sin. This includes considering what's transmitted from the Prophet about mortal sins in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*. There then follows a discussion about means of livelihood such as agriculture, trade, etc. Any activity by which one earns one's sustenance is in fact a begging bowl one holds out before God. In the end, it's God Who bestows on us our sustenance and not the apparent work we do.

Then there are the topics of the right and the wrong attitude in pursuing one's livelihood. You must fix your gaze on God the way the beggar looks at those who give to him. Don't be deluded into imagining your sustenance comes from your stratagems and your planning. This will cause you to be cut off from God.

The section closes with a description of four categories of human beings in terms of their degree of obedience to God: 1) the person's exterior and interior are with God, 2) his exterior and interior are with other than God, 3) his exterior is with God and his interior is with other than God, and 4) his exterior is with other than God, indeed engaged in sins, whereas his interior is with God. Category 3) is illustrated by a disciple of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī who's ordered to give up his fasting. And it's explained that the person in category 4) is weighed down by a burden like a mountain and is forever sad and dejected.

In [5] al-Dabbāgh explains what causes the body to be disturbed at certain times and to cry out, as for instance, when performing the *dhikr* (recollection of God). This is due to the fact that the spirit (*rūḥ*) sometimes provides the body with light during worship and other times when the body is engaged in lust. Al-Lamaṭī relates that he was with al-Dabbāgh one day when a man sat down with them and began to let out abominable cries. Al-Dabbāgh afterwards explained that if satans see a person who wishes to obtain the heart's orientation toward God through the *dhikr* or listening to edifying words, they penetrate his heart and corrupt his orientation out of jealousy toward the offspring of Adam. The 'crier out' thinks he's something important, but woe unto whoever has fingers pointed at him!

As an illustration of this point, a story that goes back to Zarrūq is related about a group of *fuqarā'* in Fez who are deluded into thinking their *dhikr* performances are bringing them closer to

God. An upright man who's blind tells them he sees Satan in their midst in the form of a goat that butts them one after the other and causes them to cry out.

In section [6] we have a discussion about the harmfulness of tobacco. In this connection, other malodorous substances such as human excrement and dung, as well as garlic and onions, are dealt with, all of which cause angels to flee. Tobacco is condemned, whereas garlic and onions have some benefits for man.

In [7] two different views are examined concerning whether one should enter a bathhouse in which there are people who don't cover up their nakedness. Al-Dabbāgh notes that between the darkness of gazing at the private parts of others and the darkness of Hell there are threads and connections by means of which one is condemned to the wretchedness of Hell-fire. Even a pious man who recites the *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* in the midst of sinful wine-drinkers will become one of the sinners himself before a single night has elapsed.

In [8] al-Dabbāgh discourses on Hell. The believer in God and His apostles is familiar with Hell. Indeed, when Hell is mentioned it's present in his interior the way it's present in his exterior. But one must make its presence last. Al-Lamaṭī asks what causes its presence not to last. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'The blood that's in the body and its vapor.' When someone's frightened, the blood leaves his face and 'forgetfulness' (i.e. not thinking about Hell) is interrupted. If one neglects recollecting Hell, the blood returns and with it comes forgetfulness.

[9] Al-Dabbāgh continues to develop the idea of recollection (*dhikr*) versus forgetfulness. Recollection is wakefulness and awareness, but as soon as a voice stops calling someone who's sleeping, he sinks back into his sleep. In a normal state of affairs forgetfulness has precedence and dominates the body.

In [10] al-Lamaṭī asks about unveiling (*kashf*). Al-Dabbāgh begins by answering: 'Unveiling, good fortune and other things like these are all caused by the heart being cut off from God...' The proper attitude for the bondsman is to put himself in God's hands and to rely entirely on Him. The wrong attitude entails forgetfulness. In the latter case a person wants to know about the Unseen. God abandons such a person to himself and to his 'darkened vision' and 'unveiled sight'. By way of illustration a story is told about a Christian monk who chops off his feet as penance for having turned his back on the cross when leaving the

church. The monk exclaims: 'This is the reward for someone who turns away from his lord (*sayyid*).'

Two categories of people are then discussed, the people of mercy and the people of His vengeance. The first group is moved by God to do what pleases Him. God causes the second group to attach its heart to other than Himself. Al-Dabbāgh recounts a paradoxical story about old men who only discuss worldly matters without mention of God and two youths who fast and speak of God's unicity and His attributes. The story illustrates how God predetermines the behavior of human beings contrary to our expectations.

The section closes with a story about a Friend of God who was 'dispossessed' by God. The ex-Friend retains great capacity in matters to do with medicine. He then earns large sums of money but he dies without an heir. His final outcome is sheer loss.

In section [11] al-Lamaṭī asks about the Friend of God's conception of major ritual impurity. Al-Dabbāgh replies that normally ritual impurity is thought to occur after sexual intercourse, but for the Friend it results from any form of being cut off from God. This happens, for instance, if the body turns all its eyes away from God and its veins are filled with delight for 'other' than Him.

In this connection, al-Dabbāgh says the perfect Friend of God can talk in someone's ear and raise that person in one instant to the same spiritual level as himself. But the whole matter depends on the 'adhesive' which causes the 'secret' to stick. Al-Lamaṭī wonders what's meant by 'adhesive'. Al-Dabbāgh explains it's the death of the carnal soul.

Al-Lamaṭī asks for a further explanation. He's told that works for the sake of other than God are a sign that the carnal soul is alive. Al-Lamaṭī asks what's the antidote which causes the carnal soul to die. 'There's nothing except that the great mountain descend on it.' 'What's the great mountain?' Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'Knowledge of God... and beholding Him.' A man must realize that nothing he can do makes any difference. His only hope must be that God, out of His generosity, bestows benefit on him. 'It's at this moment that he desires nothing but God, and his carnal soul dies.'

In [12] al-Dabbāgh explains why the game checkers (*al-dāma*) is forbidden. Everything that cuts the bondsman off from God is forbidden. On the other hand, there are some who maintain that

chess is permissible because it develops one's sense of strategy in warfare.

[13] Al-Lamaṭī here reports al-Dabbāgh's words about what causes repentance. Genuine repentance comes from love of all the believers without distinction. 'This general love is sufficient to eradicate all sins.' Love removes envy which is one of the greatest of sins. As for a sinner, one must direct one's hate against his actions, not against his believing body, his pure heart and constant faith. '...we may represent his sins before our eyes...as stones tied to his clothes on the outside of his body. We love his person but we hate the stones tied to his clothes.'

In closing, al-Dabbāgh adds that anyone who distinguishes himself through his mount and his clothes, his house and his food, is shameless because in this way he distracts people from paying attention to God. Someone present asks whether distinguishing oneself by giving alms also causes harm. Al-Dabbāgh replies that it does not. But he warns the person to conceal his almsgiving.

In [14] the discussion of almsgiving continues. Al-Dabbāgh makes the point that it's virtuous to give alms even if you find delight in it and it makes you conceited. It's always possible that you may forget this attitude and that your alms come forth unimpaired. On the other hand, hypocrisy is a different matter. If the almsgiver gives for the sake of how it looks to the people, it becomes a sin. If your almsgiving is for a reward and not purely for the sake of God, you'll constantly be plagued by doubts about it. Even giving alms in order to draw close to God will cause you harm. Work must be solely for the sake of God.

Al-Dabbāgh tells the story of how he wanted to give a garment to a fool in the winter. But the fool wouldn't accept it because he knew al-Dabbāgh was offering it to him so that God would fulfill a wish for him. Now if a human being refuses to accept something given for other than God's sake, how is it with the Creator?

Al-Dabbāgh tells the story of the worshipper (*ʿābid*) who's on the point of dying and takes consolation from the fact that he's performed a great amount of worship. God dispossesses him and he dies in that state. 'How many devoted worshippers like him are in Hell...!' Al-Lamaṭī asks whether it isn't enough that the man's worship was nullified. Al-Dabbāgh replies that if you consider your good actions, they turn into sins for which you'll be punished in Hell.

Then al-Dabbāgh explains that there are two kinds of people who work for the Makhzan (government). One is the believer who's forced to do this work and feels constriction (*inqibāḍ*) because of it. He will be saved in the hereafter. The second kind finds oppressing the people sweet, the way the dung beetle finds eating filth and garbage sweet.

When people cut off from God extort money, the angels are delighted if someone uses deceit and takes the money from them. Money bears God's names on it and the angels are attached to His names.

The weak bondsman adopts planning (*tadbīr*) and in so doing is forgetful of God. Were it not for forgetfulness, human beings would be like the angels. They wouldn't have a carnal soul and need to have religion imposed on them. Indeed, they would be permanently extinguished (*fānī*).

If the bondsman attaches value to God, outwardly and inwardly, he won't pass away and he won't die. When members of the Diwān die, it's they who ritually wash themselves. 'On the bier you see a corpse as well as a corpsewasher, and the two are one.'

[15] Al-Dabbāgh recounts an unusually detailed story about how he travels to a desert island in the Atlantic with Sayyidī Maṣṣūr. The story illustrates the limitations of hermits who spend their entire life worshipping in isolated places. The 'worshipper' they find on the island has grown up there eating fruits and leaves. His only clothing consists of twigs and branches.

They question him about Islam and discover that he knows almost nothing about the Prophet, proper rituals and fasting during Ramaḍān. 'Do you sleep?', they ask. He only sleeps for a brief moment between the beginning of sunset and total darkness. Otherwise, all he does is bowing and prostrations. He doesn't want to go with them to an Islamic land, nor is he willing to part with the large horde of coins he's accumulated from sea captains who pay him to invoke blessings on them. Al-Dabbāgh and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr leave. 'When he saw us walk on the surface of the water...and we didn't sink, he began invoking God's protection against us...'

Al-Lamaṭī points out the lessons to be drawn from this story. There are great benefits to be had by living with the believers such as knowledge of the legal prescriptions and the affairs of the Prophet and his Companions. The worshipper in the story has been deprived of many aspects of God's bounty. He lacks giving



thanks for that bounty which would be a complete equivalent and replacement of all his worship on that island. Al-Lamaṭī adds: ‘...how many people are deceived regarding recluses in the desert!’ They imagine the station reached by devout hermits is higher than that of the Friends of God who remain submerged among the people.

Al-Dabbāgh informs us that he can see the light of faith that comes forth from people’s bodies and ascends to Barzakh (see Chpt. Ten). The lights of ‘worshippers’ are usually weaker than those of ordinary people who rely on God’s generosity rather than worship.

In closing al-Dabbāgh reports on how ‘Umar al-Hawwārī sat by one of the gates of Fez and as individuals came out through the gate he looked into their interiors. The interiors of ten people are described and they represent the normal range of diversity in the Muslim community. ‘Umar also sees that there’s something in their interiors that governs them and arises from God’s will. These people think their action comes from their own initiative and that they have a choice, but it’s God Who decides everything.

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**Chapter Four** gives a very detailed description of the Dīwān of the godly men (*al-ṣāliḥūn*). The Dīwān is a council made up of the most high-ranking Friends of God who are in charge of running the whole world and everything that occurs in it—in conformity with God’s pre-eternal decree.

[1] The Dīwān is located in the Cave of Ḥirā’ which is where the Prophet undertook pious devotions before his mission began. The Support (*al-ghawth*) who is the chief of the Council sits outside the cave. On his right are four Pivots (*aqṭāb*) who are Mālikites, and on his left are three Pivots who belong to the other three schools of jurisprudence. The arrangement of the concentric circles which contain the living and dead godly men, as well as the women, the angels and the perfect among the Jinn, is meticulously described. The Wakīl who’s known as the *qādī* of the Dīwān is Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm of Baṣra and he speaks on behalf of everyone in the Dīwān.

Al-Dabbāgh points out certain details that allow one to tell which of the members of the Dīwān are living and which are dead. The dead arrive from Barzakh flying ‘by means of the spirit’s flying’. On some occasions the Prophet is present which

necessitates a reshuffling of the seating so that the Prophet may occupy the Support's position.

[2] The hour during which the Dīwān convenes is the time of the night when the Prophet was born. This is the period of time when prayers are answered. Al-Lamaṭī explains that if you recite the Qur'ānic verse 18/107, God will cause you to wake up at the precise time when prayers are answered.

[3] To begin with the Dīwān was comprised of angels but after the Prophet was sent, it began to be made up of the Friends of God from his community. Whenever a Friend of God appeared in the Dīwān, an angel ascended upward to make room for him.

[4] The angels that remain in the Dīwān are the angels who were guardians over the Prophet's body in the world. When the Prophet is present in the Dīwān, the angels hasten to enter into his light and they then become invisible as long as he remains there.

[5] In every city there are a great number of angels who provide help to 'the people of the power of free disposal' (*ahl al-taṣarruf*) among the Friends of God when something has to be done that the Friends can't undertake by themselves. These angels are disguised sometimes as a gentleman, sometimes as a poor man, or on occasion even as a small child.

[6] Al-Lamaṭī asks about the custom of opening a chapter of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* at the grave of a Friend of God and making a request. Al-Dabbāgh explains that in every city there are angels who, if they observe someone make a request this way by providing the material body of the book, they will provide the book's secrets. Al-Lamaṭī asks what the secret is that's added to the book's material body. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the same way the secret of sweetness distinguishes the body of honey, every book has a secret and if the secret is lost, the book is of no use.

Then al-Lamaṭī asks whether Abraham, Moses and the other prophets are present in the Dīwān. The answer is yes, on one night of the year, i.e. the Night of Power, when the Prophet and his wives and Companions are present.

[7] There is disagreement about whether our mistress Khadīja is superior to our mistress ʿĀʾisha. Al-Dabbāgh testifies that when they're present on the Night of Power, the light of ʿĀʾisha is greater than the light of Khadīja.

[8] An explanation of the origin of the Night of Power is given. 'Before the creation of light in the sun's celestial orb the world was dark.' When God created light in the sun, the angels of the sky and the earth were thrown in an uproar. They began to flee

from the bright light toward the shadow. But when they saw that nothing bad resulted from the light, they felt safe and returned to their posts on earth and in the sky. They then made it a practice to gather together on that one night every year.

As for Friday, it was the day God created Adam. The only religious community to be afforded success with Friday was this noble community. It was offered to the Jews but they chose Saturday, and it was offered to the Christians but they chose Sunday.

[9] Al-Dabbāgh presents an elaborate description of the origin and nature of 'the moment of Friday'. God finished creating the world during the last moment of Friday. All the creatures then beseeched Him to bestow on them well-being and His approval. The moment of Friday is very brief and it moves about throughout the year, though it always occurs during some part of Friday. Then al-Dabbāgh explains the relation of the moment of Friday to the moment of the Prophet's sermon which doesn't move around but is at midday. Al-Lamaṭī ends the section by citing several *ḥadīths* that corroborate what al-Dabbāgh has said about the moment of Friday.

[10] Al-Dabbāgh explains that the language of the Dīwān is Syriac which is the language of the spirits and the angels—except when the Prophet is present and everyone speaks Arabic. And he adds that not everyone who attends the Dīwān has the capacity to look at the Well-guarded Tablet. Likewise, the small Friend of God must attend the Dīwān with his body, i.e. he's physically absent from his home. The great Friend attends the Dīwān but isn't absent from his house.

On one occasion al-Dabbāgh said mysteriously: 'What's this Dīwān? The Friends of God who constitute it are all in my breast.' And another time he said: 'The Dīwān actually convenes in my breast.'

And he can name all the eminent among the Friends of God because he's visited the cupola of Barzakh where the spirits of those who've received the great illumination reside. Al-Dabbāgh notes that Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī is one of the great but even if he'd lived up to the present time, he wouldn't attain al-Dabbāgh's spiritual stations. 'Nor would he advance as much as 'Abd al-'Azīz (al-Dabbāgh) has advanced from yesterday to today.' He adds that he's not boasting but simply describing the favor God has bestowed on him.

[11] Al-Dabbāgh tells al-Lamaṭī that when the Support is absent from the Dīwān, there may be disagreements that cause the Friends of God to kill one another. Al-Lamaṭī asks why the Support is sometimes absent. The answer is that he may be absorbed in beholding God so that the worlds disappear from his sight. Or if he's a new Support, he must accustom his body to the Dīwān by stages. Likewise, when the Support is absent, the Prophet may attend the Dīwān along with Abū Bakr, °Umar, °Uthmān, °Alī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, Fāṭima, etc., and this stirs up fear and anxiety among the other members.

When the people of the Dīwān gather, they agree on what will happen in the world from that very moment up until the same moment the next day. They have 'the power of free disposal' in the sublunar as well as the translunar worlds. In this connection, when al-Dabbāgh is asked to help someone who has a problem with the Makhzan, he reassures him by saying: 'If you think the cat devours the mouse without a certain person's permission'—he meant himself—'then your opinion is worthless.'

In closing, al-Dabbāgh mentions some other places where the Dīwān convenes on rare occasions.

[12] Al-Lamaṭī asks whether those who are drawn unto God (*al-majādhīb*) are admitted to the Dīwān. Al-Dabbāgh replies that they aren't admitted at present but when the Anti-Christ (*al-Dajjāl*) appears at the end of time, they'll obtain the power of free disposal and one of their number will be the chief of the Dīwān.

Al-Dabbāgh relates the story about Sayyidī Ḥammād al-Majdhūb. He begs in the marketplace of Cairo in order to eat, though through his clairvoyance he knows about a sum of gold buried under his feet. The Friend of God has two rights when he begs, the right of the faith of an ordinary believer and the right based on his knowledge of God. Al-Lamaṭī asks what portion of one's wealth knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*) can claim. Al-Dabbāgh replies that it's the same as what the bond of brotherhood in God claims, i.e. half your wealth if you have only one brother, one-tenth if you have nine such brothers.

[13] Al-Lamaṭī asks: 'What's the difference then between the person drawn unto God and the traveller on the path...?' Al-Dabbāgh replies that the *majdhūb* is someone whose exterior is affected by what he sees. He imitates the things he sees. If you see him swaying back and forth to music, for instance, he's absent in his vision (*mushāhada*) of the virgins of Paradise, for this is the manner of their movements. As for the traveller on the path, his

exterior isn't affected by what he sees. He's an abounding, tranquil ocean upon which nothing appears. He's more perfect and his reward is greater because he follows in the footsteps of the Prophet. Conversely, those drawn unto God, for the most part, aren't in possession of their wits.

A story illustrates this difference. One of the travellers on the path among the members of the Dīwān wanted to know whether his son would grow up to be a traveller or someone drawn unto God. He brings the child before the Support to find this out. The Support takes a knife and begins whittling a piece of wood. One minute he bites his tongue and the next he bites his lips. When he sees that the child does the same, he knows he's going to be someone drawn unto God.

In general, the 'traveller' avoids people drawn unto God. He won't eat with them, travel with them, wear their clothes or marry a woman who's drawn unto God. None the less, in rare cases the one may be the spiritual guide of the other.

[14] Al-Dabbāgh explains that the Friends of God do some astonishing things but, as in the case of everyone else, their actions come from God. The Friend, however, can see God's actions behind what everyone does, though he can't see God's actions in himself. No created being is capable of seeing God's actions in his own body. The role of angels is to act as intermediaries between God's actions and man, and angels are found everywhere throughout creation.

[15] Al-Lamaṭī refers to the extraordinary powers God gave to Solomon, David, and Jesus, as well as to the evidentiary miracles of the other prophets. And he asks why our Prophet didn't have powers like these. Al-Dabbāgh replies that God has given all these powers to the members of the Dīwān. They have command over the Jinn, mankind, the angels, the wind, etc. They can cure lepers and raise the dead. In fact, all this comes to them through the blessing of the Prophet. But God keeps their powers hidden and veiled, lest people devote themselves too much to these high-ranking Friends of God.

[16] Al-Lamaṭī says the people of the power of free disposal have the capacity to destroy the infidels so why do they leave them at peace in their unbelief. Al-Dabbāgh explains that it's true that they can destroy the infidels but they aren't allowed to use their power that way. The Friend must fight against them with a sword and a lance. To illustrate this point, al-Dabbāgh tells the story of how one Friend of God is divested of his powers by

another Friend because he used his 'secret' against the infidels in a sea battle. He caused a fire to break out on board their ship without any apparent cause to conceal his supernatural power.

Al-Dabbāgh tells another story about a little Christian girl. She asks her father who it was that created the moon. He points to a cross in the ground and says: 'This did.' The girl lifts up the cross and then lets go of it. It falls to the ground. She then asks: '...if it can't stay up this small amount, who held it up so it could create the moon in its lofty height...?' Her father curses her. Al-Lamaṭī then asks whether the girl was a Muslim. Al-Dabbāgh answers: 'No.' 'Did she become a Muslim...?' 'No.' 'So where did she get this true objection from...?' Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'One of the people of truth was on hand. He looked at her and then she spoke.' Al-Lamaṭī notes that it was al-Dabbāgh who looked at her with an interior look but this was kept hidden.

[17] Al-Lamaṭī poses some questions about what happens when a Friend of God takes on a different body. How does he then experience pain? Al-Dabbāgh replies that people think pain concerns the body but in reality pain affects the spirit. Thus the Friend in a different body experiences pain in his spirit and not in his own body or the new body. Al-Lamaṭī asks how the Friends enter an animal's body. Is there room in the animal for both their spirits at the same time? Al-Dabbāgh replies that no problem arises to do with space. In this regard, the camel, the bull, and cats and dogs are considered.

In the case of the Friend entering a snake that kills with poison, there's no poison in the Friend's spirit but his effective will (*himma*) brings about someone's death. And al-Dabbāgh adds that the spirit can leave a person's body for twenty-four hours because effects of the spirit such as heat still persist.

[18] Al-Lamaṭī knows of a Friend of God who was absent from his body for three days. Al-Dabbāgh comments that this is possible and can even occur for as long as seventeen days, but in such a case the spirit must long for the body. Through the spirit's longing the body obtains life. When the spirit has left the body, it's like a swimmer in a river who keeps gazing at his clothes on the shore to make sure they aren't stolen. In this way the spirit cautiously looks after the body from outside.

[19] The Friend of God who possesses the power of free disposal can extend his hands into anyone's pockets and take as many dirhems as he wishes. Al-Dabbāgh then tells the story of the Friend who left a sum of money with his neighbor's wife. She

dies and her husband spends the money. The Friend asks for his money but the neighbor denies any knowledge of it. The neighbor then saves up the same sum and decides to make a donation at the shrine of °Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī. The Friend extends his hand from a great distance and takes the money out of the man's pocket. The neighbor returns and complains to the Friend that 'they' stole his money. The Friend simply lets out a laugh. Al-Lamaṭī adds that the Friend in question was al-Dabbāgh.

This is followed by another story about money. A particular jurist is sitting down with al-Dabbāgh and when he's asked whether he has any money, he denies it. Al-Dabbāgh repeats the question three times. Finally, the jurist says he does have some money with him. But when he looks for it in his pocket, he can't find it. Al-Dabbāgh laughs and produces the money from underneath the man. Al-Dabbāgh then orders him to spend all his worldly goods for the sake of God. The jurist begins to do this with openhandedness and generosity. Others feel al-Dabbāgh is demanding too much of him but al-Dabbāgh knows the man's death is near at hand and is 'building palaces for him in Paradise'.

The final point al-Dabbāgh wishes to make is that the high-ranking Friend of God can take things that he knows God has intended for him, and this isn't stealing. Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, for instance, went into the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs, saw the sandals of a certain Abū Ya°azzā and took them. Sayyidī Maṣṣūr beheld the sandals as belonging to himself on the Well-guarded Tablet.

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**Chapter Five** deals with what al-Dabbāgh had to say about the office of the spiritual master (*shaykh*) and being a disciple (*irāda*).

[1] A jurist asks al-Dabbāgh whether what the shaykh Zarrūq (d. 1493) had said is true, namely that training disciples in the strict sense has ceased. Al-Dabbāgh presents a rather thorough theoretical explanation of the spiritual guide's role. The purpose of training is to cleanse the body of its vanities and remove the darkness from it so that it becomes capable of carrying the secret. The first three generations in Islam didn't need spiritual training and they attained the degree of independent juridical interpretation (*ijtihād*). At that time the novice received illumination by the shaykh simply speaking in his ear. But ever

since the first three generations the separation of darkness from bodies has been brought about at the hands of a shaykh.

To begin with the novice is engaged in falsehood, lusts, relying on reason, etc., and therefore the shaykh orders him to undertake spiritual retreat (*khalwa*), recollection of God (*dhikr*), and to diminish his food. This is in order to prepare the body to be able to support the secret. In Zarrūq's time, however, people of falsehood trained whoever came to them, and imparted God's names with a corrupt intention. Along with this they sometimes even taught magic incantations which provoked God's deceit (*makr*) and various forms of His lulling a person into false contentment (*istidrāj*)

But the true shaykh is familiar with the Prophet's states and his body has been given to drink the Prophet's lights. Thus the novice must love the shaykh. Association with the shaykh will lead him to God. He removes doubts in the novice and causes him to advance in his love of the Prophet.

[2] The same jurist asks for a description of the halting-stations one must traverse in order to have an encounter with the Prophet in a waking state. Al-Dabbāgh explains that there are three hundred and sixty-six veins in the body, each with its own flaw or sin. They include lying, envy, hypocrisy, betrayal, conceit, pride, etc. These represent the halting-stations of the carnal soul that the novice must traverse in order to receive illumination. Each time he eliminates one of these flaws, he attains a corresponding positive station, for instance, the station of truthfulness, the station of asceticism, the station of repentance, etc.

If he receives illumination and the secret is placed in his body, he then advances through stations of higher vision (*mushāhada*). By means of this vision he sees earthen bodies, then translunar bodies, then bodies of light. Then he comes to see God's actions pervading His creation. If the bondsman isn't given success and isn't assisted by God's mercy, he'll return from the least of these stages rendered feeble-minded. Traversing the stations of vision is harder than traversing the stations of the carnal soul's attributes. But if his gaze and his deeper vision are pure, God will bestow on him sight of the chief of the first and the last.

Whoever claims to have seen the Prophet in a waking state, let him be questioned about the Prophet's pure states. It will be perfectly clear who answers on the basis of direct vision (the way in Chpt. One al-Dabbāgh explains the meaning of the *aḥruf*



which concern the Prophet's states and qualities). And al-Dabbāgh gives further details about the lights that enter the body due to illumination, and their different effects. This includes rays of light from the Prophet's body: the ray of patience, the ray of mercy, the ray of forbearance, etc. In the end, all the characteristics associated with black bile are eliminated from the body.

[3] Now the jurist asks what it means if the perfect shaykh trains the novice with his effective will (*himma*) but as soon as the shaykh is absent from him, the novice's spiritual state grows weak. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the shaykh's effective will is the light of his faith in God. If the novice's love of the shaykh comes from the light of his own faith, the shaykh will assist him even if he's absent, nay even if he's dead and a thousand years have elapsed. If the novice's love comes from his body, then he only has benefit from the shaykh as long as the latter is present.

[4] The jurist now asks whether al-Shādhilī's path of thankfulness (*shukr*) or al-Ghazzālī's path of ascetic struggle (*mujāhada*) is more worthy. The first path consists entirely of thankfulness and joy in the divine Benefactor without hardship and trouble. The second path revolves around self-mortification (*riyāda*), fatigue, hardship, sleeplessness, hunger, etc. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the path of thankfulness is the original path, the one adhered to by the prophets and Companions. It entails sincerity in being God's bondsman (*ʿubūdiyya*) and acknowledgement of our inability to fulfill God's rightful claims of Lordliness (*rubūbiyya*). When the adherents of self-mortification heard about the illumination these people received, they made it the object of their seeking. They sought it by means of fasting, rising [at night], sleeplessness and continual spiritual retreat. Both paths are correct but thankfulness is more correct and more sincere.

Those on the path of self-mortification remain attached to the unveilings they behold, walking on water, covering great distances in one step, etc. Christian monks and the rabbis of the Jews practice self-mortification and they attain certain results that lure them to destruction. But al-Dabbāgh adds that these are general criticisms and not directed against al-Ghazzālī who was an imam of truth and a Friend of God with sincerity. Indeed, it's possible for one man to travel both these paths, for no contradiction exists between them.

[5] The same jurist asks whether it's possible for someone to know what his capacity (*qābiliyya*) is for being a novice. Al-Dabbāgh replies that a person can know his capacity by observing the dominant element in his thought. Capacity is like manliness and bravery in that it has different degrees. The ideas that occur in one's interior are a light of reason imparted to the body in accordance with the divine decree. There then follow various illustrations of the maxim: 'Everyone is given help with what he was created for.' And al-Lamaṭī presents some descriptions of people whose temperament makes them fit for different kinds of work, for example the silk-maker who becomes a plasterer.

Al-Dabbāgh then explains that certain people are innately predisposed to become Friends of God, whereas others are innately predisposed toward wickedness. Al-Lamaṭī comments that this confirms his many years of experience as a teacher. He'd gone to extremes in giving advice and offering sound arguments to certain people. Sadly, they were like a riding animal that goes on walking as long as you beat it but once you stop beating it, it comes to a halt. With others the opposite would occur. After simply associating with him briefly, whatever he said settled in their hearts. This had troubled al-Lamaṭī but al-Dabbāgh tells him: 'Cast the burden from yourself. You're striking cold iron. People are given help with what they were created for...' Al-Lamaṭī says that from that day on he felt relief.

[6] The jurist asks what's the meaning of Iblīs being Sahl al-Tustarī's shaykh with regard to the Qur'ānic verse: 'And My mercy embraces all things' (7/156). Iblīs had told him: 'Restriction is your characteristic, not God's characteristic.' Furthermore, Ibn al-ʿArabī says: 'The Cursed One is the [spiritual] master of Sahl in this regard...' Al-Dabbāgh replies that Iblīs adheres to a specious argument in this matter. By 'restriction' Ibn al-ʿArabī and Sahl had in mind something quite different from what Iblīs meant. After illumination Sufis feel they've previously been imposing restrictions on God. When Sahl heard Iblīs talk about restriction, he took his words as referring to this phenomenon. Such a feeling among Sufis has to do with a particular form of hearing (*samāʿ*) that they experience. Some examples are given of the special way Sufis hear people's words.

[7] The jurist cites the words of a knower of God who said: 'In disobedience there are a hundred mercies which are accorded the

believer.' And he asks what these mercies are. Al-Dabbāgh replies that disobedience refers to a sin committed by a knower of God. Fear settles in his body because of his knowledge of God's awesome power. Being preoccupied with extreme fear, he's now protected from any further sin. This is what's meant by disobedience bestowing innumerable mercies on the bondsman. Someone without fear is given to lusts and pleasures. Thus the matter doesn't revolve around obedience and disobedience but it revolves around fear and its opposite.

[8] The jurist asks about some age-old theological conundrums. For instance: 'In everything I see I see God.' But how can the eternal be in the contingent since God is elevated above residence [in a thing] and union [with it]. Al-Dabbāgh explains that the knower of God sees God's actions in created things, and indeed all created things contain His actions. But this isn't the same as God residing in or being unified with His creation.

[9] The jurist asks about what happens when the believer visualizes in his mind the form of the Prophet. Does that form come from the world of the spirit or from the world of images or from the world of the imagination? And is the person who sees the form and hears the Prophet speak protected from Satan, as is the case when one sees the Prophet in a dream? Al-Dabbāgh replies that the visualization is from a person's spirit and his reason. The form that appears to him will resemble the Prophet more or less, depending on how much the person knows about the Prophet's real appearance. What the believer sees comes from his own spirit and isn't the Prophet's spirit. If someone hears the Prophet speak and his body is pure, only then is he protected from Satan's insinuations.

[10] One day a disciple present at the *dhikr* performance of a godly man underwent a change of complexion and exclaimed: 'And know that the Apostle of God is among you' (49/7). Al-Lamaṭī asks whether this vision (*mushāhada*) was a vision of illumination or a vision of thought. Al-Dabbāgh replies that it was a vision of thought. But he adds that this is only experienced by people of pure faith and sincere love.

Al-Lamaṭī points out that such a mental vision is experienced by someone whose love for a person has become perfected, even if that person isn't the Prophet. Then al-Lamaṭī tells about a butcher whose son died. He loved his son so dearly that the young man was always in his thoughts. One day when buying sheep in the market, he beheld his son and spoke to him. People

asked him whom he was talking to. He then came back to his senses. Al-Dabbāgh concludes: 'Love like this must exist between the novice and the shaykh. It confers great benefit.'

[11] This long section (pp. 636-54) begins with some stories to do with intense love that removes one's sense of separate identity. They illustrate the bond of intense love that must exist between the shaykh and his disciple. For instance, a disciple loves his shaykh so much that he imitates everything he does. If the shaykh is in his house and begins to wind a turban around his head, the disciple takes hold of something and wraps it around his head. Love like this causes [spiritual] inheritance to occur. Likewise, someone loves a beautiful girl to the point that if anyone calls out her name: 'Oh Fāṭima', he replies: 'Yes!' without even being aware of it. Then there's a Christian lad who's so in love that when his beloved removes a pimple from his face with a poisoned knife, he feels nothing. The poison spreads and his spirit departs, and all the while he's 'absent' in his love of her.

Al-Dabbāgh remarks that a devotee (*muḥibb*) derives no benefit from a [spiritually] great person loving him. The small person must love the great one and only then does he receive benefit from the great person's love. If a pear loves a sour apple, for instance, it absorbs the sour taste that's in the apple. Al-Lamaṭī says he's heard that the shaykh is with the disciple in the disciple's body. Al-Dabbāgh replies that this is true if the disciple's love is strong. His love attracts the shaykh who then resides in his body. The disciple is like a pregnant woman who carries her child. Her foetus may develop properly until she gives birth or it may be lost or it may fall asleep and only wake up after a month or a year.

Al-Dabbāgh explains that the disciple doesn't profit if he loves the shaykh for his secret or his Friendship with God. His love must be for the shaykh's person (*dhāt*). There should be no motives in their love. In this regard, al-Dabbāgh once tested al-Lamaṭī. He asked him if he'd like to meet Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, one of the Pivots of the Dīwān. Al-Lamaṭī is excited and says yes. Al-Dabbāgh reproaches him and declares that, for his part, he wouldn't look at anyone else than al-Lamaṭī, no matter what the person's qualities were. Al-Lamaṭī says: 'I woke from my negligence and was roused from my sleep.'

Al-Lamaṭī asks whether there are signs of the proper kind of love in a disciple. Al-Dabbāgh replies that there are two signs: 1)

the disciple's repose is in the shaykh, while everything he does is for the shaykh's interests, and 2) the disciple exhibits polite behavior and reverence toward the shaykh. Though the shaykh is in a well and the disciple is in a minaret, what the disciple sees is the opposite of this—out of reverence for the shaykh.

Al-Dabbāgh points out that in reality it's the disciple who renders a service to the shaykh. If it weren't for the purity of the disciple's body, his receptivity for good, and his love that exercises attraction, the shaykh wouldn't be able to do anything.

Al-Dabbāgh says that the proper disciple sees all the shaykh's actions, words, and every one of his states as rightly guided by God. If there's anything the shaykh does that the disciple can't understand, the disciple consigns its meaning to God in the conviction that the shaykh is always right. If it appears to the disciple that the shaykh has done something wrong, then the disciple has fallen on his head. And the shaykh doesn't demand any external service or worldly goods from the disciple. His only demand is that the disciple believe that the shaykh possesses perfection, God-given success, and deeper vision and closeness to God. To be able to support a secret of God a person must listen to no one but the shaykh and have performed the prayer for the dead over everyone but his shaykh.

By way of introducing a series of twelve stories about the relationship between the shaykh and the disciple, al-Lamaʿī first reports what al-Dabbāgh said about 'the body's certainty'. Sayyidi Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm testifies as to how he once felt immense certainty that he could walk on water and he did so. Another time he felt less certain and his feet sank in the water. Al-Dabbāgh adds that Satan doesn't draw close to a body that's absolutely certain about something. Firm certainty is like the fortified wall of a city. If a breach occurs, the enemy hastens to enter.

As for the stories: 1) A man named ʿAbd al-ʿAlī is moved by God to sell his property and set out to visit someone who's reputed to be a Friend of God. In reality the 'godly man' is a fraud. He drinks wine and spends money extravagantly. When ʿAbd al-ʿAlī enters before the shaykh, he sees the wine and he sees a dissolute woman in the shaykh's company. But he disregards what he sees. He hands over his money to the shaykh and says he's come to offer him service. The shaykh gives him a hoe and sends him off to work in a garden. Meanwhile, a great Friend of God in the Dīwān is about to die and he has no heir to

pass on his secret to. He declares that the man who's gone to serve the fraudulent shaykh deserves to be his heir because of his purity and deep-rooted certainty. 'Abd al-°Alī then receives the secret and experiences illumination.

2) A shaykh wishes to test his disciple's loyalty. He asks him whether he loves him more than he loves his father. He asks what the disciple would do if he ordered him to bring him his father's head. The disciple replies: '...you shall see presently.' It's nighttime and the disciple climbs into his family house. He then sneaks up on his parents while they're making love and cuts off his father's head. When he returns with the severed head, the shaykh is shocked but, as it turns out, it isn't actually the father that the disciple has killed. It's a foreign slave with whom the mother was betraying the father.

3) A disciple comes to a shaykh who's a knower of God in order to reside with him and to serve him. The shaykh gives him a hoe with an iron ball attached to it. The ball only makes the hoe that much heavier and more unwieldy. If the disciple uses the hoe without complaining about the iron ball, he'll inherit the shaykh's secret. Not one vein of doubt stirred in the disciple, nor did storms of Satan's winds sway him. The ball became like non-existence which is neither seen nor heard. And God confers success on people with this kind of sincerity.

4) A sincere disciple witnesses many shocking things on the part of his shaykh but no misgivings arise in his heart. When his shaykh dies, the disciple experiences illumination and comes to understand the reason behind everything that had appeared doubtful. To begin with, the disciple thought the shaykh was having sexual relations with a wicked woman of the neighborhood. In reality the disciple mistook the shaykh's wife for the wicked woman. The shaykh then performed his ablutions with sand because of an injury he had. But the disciple was unaware of the shaykh's injury. Finally, a disorder he was suffering from obliged the shaykh to drink fruit juice which the disciple mistook for wine. In none of these cases, however, did the disciple fall prey to doubts. After illumination the disciple understood the cause of each apparent offense.

5) A virtuous disciple has a brother in God who dies. When the disciple receives money for a piece of land his family sells, he decides to divide the money between himself and the children of his deceased brother in God. His relatives tell him he's a fool to behave this way but he resists the temptation to keep all the

money for himself. Afterwards, God bestows illumination on him and makes him one of the knowers of God.

6) A shaykh has many disciples but suspects that only one of them possesses real excellence. He tests them by making the 'form' of a woman appear who enters his retreat. The disciples think he's behaving immorally with her. All of them, except one, flee. The shaykh then comes out of his retreat and finds the one disciple heating up water for the shaykh's ablutions. He asks the disciple whether he still intends to follow him after he's committed this sin. The disciple replies that only the prophets are entirely without sins and that he follows the shaykh because of his knowledge of the path. Thereupon the shaykh explains that the woman never really existed and shows him that his retreat is empty. Further love was now added to the disciple's original love.

7) A disciple demands the secret from a shaykh. The shaykh says he won't be able to support the secret. The shaykh then slaughters a ram in private. Covered in blood and carrying a knife in his hand, the shaykh appears before the disciple and says he lost his temper and has just killed the son of an eminent man. He'll bestow the secret on the disciple, if he refrains from telling anyone about the murder. But the disciple proves to be false and straightway informs the people and the eminent father of what he thinks has happened. A crowd gathers before the shaykh's retreat. They declare they're going to kill the shaykh who's been deceiving them as to his sanctity. In the end, the shaykh has the living son come forth before the people and he explains that he'd slaughtered a ram. The people feel great remorse. They all implore the shaykh for forgiveness and curse the false disciple.

8) A man who regularly leads pilgrims from the Maghrib on pilgrimage to Mecca loves to meet godly men. He meets a godly man in Egypt who entrusts him with a 'deposit' and tells him that whoever asks him for it is his spiritual master. Only after he returns home does a neighbor ask him for the deposit. The man then beseeches the neighbor to bestow on him the secret. The neighbor will only comply with his wish on one condition—that he consent to shave off his long beard. But the man refuses to do so for the simple reason that '...along the road to the East I'm respected and revered because of my beard'. When the shaykh dies, the man feels great remorse because of what he missed.

9) A trustworthy person, who can see the Prophet in a waking state and smell the scent of the Prophet's city (Medina) while in

Fez, describes a dispute that occurred between a Friend of God and someone who claimed to love the Friend. The man who's publicly declared his love of the Friend is his neighbor and he's regularly been eating figs from a fig-tree that belongs to the Friend. Now the Friend tells him: 'The tree is my tree. Nothing of it belongs to you!' The disagreement grows heated and the man who'd earlier claimed to love the Friend is overwhelmed by anger and ends up cursing the Friend.

10) 'One of the shaykhs drawn unto God (*majādhīb*) displayed bad conduct and people fled from him.' He even poured wine on his clothes. The people could smell the wine and they shunned his company. 'Only the heir to his secret stayed with him.' The shaykh says: 'I did this on purpose so these ants would flee from me...for I have no need of them. Need is for you—for you alone!'

11) A man came to a Friend of God and let his gaze pass over the Friend from head to foot. The man declares: 'Oh Sayyidī, this is my booty. I want my body to look at your body so that tomorrow it will intercede for my body before God.' Al-Dabbāgh comments: 'That man gained great profit.'

12) A sincere man comes to someone he believes has good in him. He says: 'Verily, I love you in God—He is mighty and glorious!' The shaykh replies: 'If you wish to profit, don't ever go back to your house. Go to the East.' Al-Dabbāgh notes: 'He obeyed... And so he gained this world and the world to come.'

[12] Al-Dabbāgh says that those who write about the thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends of God convey a wrong impression about the Friends. The reader imagines they can do absolutely anything and that they're like the prophets, i.e. protected from committing a sin. As for God fulfilling their every wish, the Prophet Muḥammad himself was only granted some of the things he asked for from God. And God refused to save Noah's son from the Flood, nor did Noah's wife and the wife of Lot profit from the spiritual status of their husbands.

Al-Dabbāgh then discusses in detail some differences between the prophets and the Friends of God, for instance their relationship to sin, their divine insights, and the influence they exercise on people. Most of the time a sin on the part of a Friend is merely on the level of appearances and not real. Moreover, whoever is familiar with the *sīra* of the Prophet—the ups and downs of his career and his periodical setbacks—will easily



understand what sometimes seems obscure in the life of the Friends of God.

Al-Dabbāgh relates the following story to illustrate how someone may have false expectations about a Friend of God. A man from Algiers comes to Fez with the intention of meeting a Friend of God about whom he's heard many miracles. He expects doormen to be posted in front of the Friend's house. When the Friend emerges from the house, the visitor finds him unimposing and assumes he's just a servant. The Friend tries to reassure him, saying: 'Oh poor wretch, I'm the one you seek.' But the man thinks he's mocking him. The visitor refuses to believe he's really met the great Friend and leaves in a huff.

Al-Lamaṭī then recounts what happened between himself and a jurist who wanted to cite for him a description of the Friend of God's qualities from one of the books of the Sufis. In this way, the jurist intended to denounce a particular Friend because he didn't possess these qualities. But there are no rigid rules about whom God may choose to distinguish by bestowing Friendship upon him. Only someone who claims he has full knowledge of God and God's treasure-chambers could be arrogant enough to judge who is and who isn't a real Friend of God. In the end, the jurist admits one mustn't impose any restraints on God in this respect.

Finally, al-Lamaṭī tells how he was criticized by a man of poverty (*faqīr*) for not having remained exclusively devoted to a certain Friend of God after the Friend's death. He reproaches al-Lamaṭī for abandoning pearls and rubies in exchange for mere stones. When al-Lamaṭī asks the man for proof of what he claims and the man can't produce any, al-Lamaṭī remarks sarcastically: 'There's only one thing I've found as proof for you... You believe you're a partner with God in His sovereignty inasmuch as He doesn't...confer illumination except with your permission.' This is what enables you to deny the upright bondsman of God. At that the jurist turns to God in repentance.

[13] Al-Lamaṭī begins by defending the Friend of God who's received illumination against a range of criticisms based on the divine law (*sharī'a*). However, the Friend of God isn't confined to one particular school of religious law. The illuminated Friend is in continual contact with the Prophet and knows God's purpose and the Prophet's purpose regarding the religiously binding prescriptions as defined by the different *madhhabs*. Indeed, if the

law were to disappear, the high-ranking Friend could actually bring it back to life again.

Critics fall into one of the following categories. There are those who are altogether ignorant of the divine law. Then there are those who only know one school of religious law and are ignorant of the others. Finally, scholars with knowledge of the four schools of jurisprudence aren't fully aware of what the early authorities like al-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī, 'Ikrima, etc., held to be the truth. Consequently, the only persons who thoroughly comprehend the *sharī'a* are the Prophet himself and his perfect heirs such as the Support in every age.

By way of illustrating the juridical superiority of an apparently unschooled Friend of God, al-Lamaṭī provides a concrete example. Someone asks a Friend to answer a question about a technical aspect of performing the ritual prayers. The answer that the Friend gives is at first rejected by a 'clever' learned scholar but it's then shown that the Friend's answer accords with the interpretations of the best early authorities. The implication can only be that the 'mystics' of the highest category know more about interpreting Islam than anyone else.

Al-Lamaṭī then sets about defending a particular Friend of God against criticisms based purely on hearsay. He points out to a scholar that in the study of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) when someone cites established sources on the subject, you don't just accept what he says without consulting the original, even if your interlocutor is a great scholar. But in the case of the Friend we're talking about you have the possibility of meeting him. You can verify his spiritual status or criticize him in person. None the less, in this important matter you're satisfied with what godless men and liars transmit. The jurist is overwhelmed and replies: 'You've silenced me with this argument.'

Another point al-Lamaṭī wishes to affirm is that there's great diversity among the Friends of God. It makes no sense to reject one of them by saying: 'We used to know Sayyidī So-and-so and he wasn't like this.' Al-Lamaṭī says he entered a garden with al-Dabbāgh in the springtime and al-Dabbāgh said: 'Whoever wishes to know the variety of the Friends of God and the differences between them in halting-stations and states, let him look at the variety of these blossoms and flowers.' And to the unsophisticated bedouin who invoked God to have mercy only on himself and on the Prophet, the Prophet remarked: '...you've fenced in what's spacious.'

In closing, al-Lamaṭī explains that he's bothered to recount his debates with the jurists because he has their well-being at heart. Throughout past generations they've been afflicted with denial of the pious, virtuous lords but, as he's shown, their denial has no basis to it.

[14] Al-Dabbāgh says one mustn't judge the Friend of God by external appearances. 'Wondrous and marvelous things are contained in the Friend of God's interior.' He then recounts the story of a high-ranking Friend of God who had a disciple who almost considered him to be on the level of prophethood. God made it appear that the shaykh had committed fornication and then the disciple renounced his exaggerated view and received illumination. And a similar thing happened to the Prophet, i.e. he was wrong about certain matters such as pollinating the palm-trees and when exactly he would return to Mecca. These apparent imperfections stopped the Companions from thinking he was divine.

And still in connection with appearances: 'The perfect Friend of God varies in accordance with the hearts and intentions of those who seek him.' The Friend is like a mirror. What appears of him to people is only what's attractive and ugly in their own interiors. His spirit takes on an apparent form which in reality is non-existent. 'Thus if you begin to speak, it speaks and if you start to eat, it eats. If you begin to drink, it drinks. If you start laughing, it laughs...'

The Friend of God focuses his attention on the interior of those who seek him and there are four categories of seekers. 1) People whose exterior is equal to their interior when it comes to belief. 2) Those whose exterior is equal to their interior in disapproval [of the Friend]. 3) Those with a believing exterior but with a disapproving interior. In this case it's as if there are two men inside the same person. 4) Those with a believing interior and a disapproving exterior. 'One can only imagine this as coming from envy.'

Al-Lamaṭī once asked al-Dabbāgh whether he had need of people's seeking and of God's making use of him in order to bring forth his impressive sciences. Al-Dabbāgh replies that when God has so preordained, a particular Friend is designated to utter indescribable insights on behalf of a seeker. On the other hand, an apparent sin on the part of the Friend is a sign of the wretchedness (damnation) of those present, just as when he performs a miracle, it's a sign that God wishes good to those

present. Otherwise, the Friend is at times overwhelmed by fear during his higher vision. He may then do things that appear to be reprehensible but which bring him back to his senses.

In this regard al-Dabbāgh notes that the angels flee from anyone, other than the Friend of God, who exposes his private parts, and by 'private parts' is meant the physical as well as mental private parts, i.e. bawdiness and shamefulness. Al-Lamaṭī asks what justifies a Friend's use of bawdy language. Al-Dabbāgh replies that using bawdy speech and exposing his private parts may be the only way someone can bring himself back to the world of the senses and cause his reason to return.

Al-Dabbāgh then recounts a story in connection with losing one's reason. A foolhardy man who's old and blind, and has numerous young children, invests all his money in a ship during the winter when the sea is highly dangerous. His reason 'departs' with the ship. 'It's then that two afflictions befall him.' 1) The orifices of his arteries become blocked due to the heat generated by his worrying about the ship. 2) When his reason departs, his spirit leaves the body never to return to it again. As a result, he's either afflicted with a fatal illness or his spirit, though separate from his body, continues to sustain his physical existence but the man is left feeble-minded. The Friend experiences similar absences. If you see him have recourse to bawdiness and laughter, it's in order to cause his reason to return and to ward off harm from his body.

[15] Al-Dabbāgh says that the Friend of God's purpose is to bring people together with God. If 'the seeker' asks the Friend about this matter, he'll find profit with him. But if he only asks the Friend to fulfill his wishes and desires, the Friend will come to hate him. And the seeker must avoid certain pitfalls. His love mustn't be a wavering love. He mustn't press the Friend for things that will only increase his estrangement from God. Moreover, if the Friend does fulfill some of his desires and provides him with unveilings, he mustn't think there's nothing to strive for beyond this. Again this will provoke the Friend's hatred.

[16] Al-Lamaṭī begins with some of al-Dabbāgh's remarks about the relation between the hearing (*samāʿ*) of the knowers of God and their higher vision (*mushāhada*). He continues by presenting al-Dabbāgh's description of an advanced stage of vision. The Friend's love becomes especially intense because of seeing God's action among His creatures. It happened, for

instance, that a Friend of God saw a cat rubbing its chin with its paw, and the Friend then began to weep. He prostrated himself before the cat and his tears drenched the ground. Indeed, due to the delight and joy he experiences when beholding God's action, the Friend says: 'If my Lord strikes me with stones, they're dearer to me than fruits.'

And al-Dabbāgh notes that if God bestows illumination on someone, the person remains in the same situation he'd been in up to then, even if the situation is of a reprehensible nature as in the case of being a butcher and other such reprehensible professions. To change his situation would be affectation before the people and equivalent to the sin of wine-drinking.

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**Chapter Six** primarily presents a commentary on al-Sharīshī's well-known *Rāʿiyya* (pp. 682-723). The *Rāʿiyya* is a versification that rhymes in the letter *rāʿ* and recapitulates what al-Sharīshī's spiritual master, Shihāb al-Dīn al-Suhrawardī (d. 1234), has said in his widely read manual on Sufism, the *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif*. The verses commented on here all deal with the spiritual master who undertakes training. This is followed by mention of the shaykhs from whom al-Dabbāgh inherited (pp. 725-29), as well as what he said about the benefit conferred by implanting the *dhikr*-formula (p. 730). Finally, al-Lamaṭī tells us what al-Dabbāgh had to say about God's 'beautiful names' (p. 738) and the ecstatic dance (*ḥadra*) (p. 741)

Pp. 682-91 present the partial commentary and paraphrase that al-Lamaṭī found written in al-Dabbāgh's copy of the *Rāʿiyya* in the Shaykh's own handwriting. To begin with, there are signs that indicate whether someone is a shaykh. The person in question must have knowledge of the external as well as the internal level of matters. Indeed, if the shaykh isn't qualified, he can cause great harm. On the other hand, if a shaykh lacks authorization from a proper teacher, there may be other signs that he's reached perfection. If, however, he only gathers people together to eat his food, don't associate with him. When asking a third party about a shaykh, make sure that person has deeper insight and isn't deluded. People with flawed judgement see defects in the perfect shaykh. You must only attach yourself to a shaykh if you're absolutely convinced that there's no one else in his era better qualified to provide you with training.

After experiencing repentance, one seeks a shaykh who's a proper model to follow. However, while rendering the shaykh

service, you must shun what the law condemns and pursue what the law extols. Moreover, if your carnal soul takes a liking to poverty, reject its desires. The carnal soul deceives the novice by inciting him to undertake works of supererogation. After all, the Prophet himself didn't practice extreme self-denial and he said: '...whoever dislikes my habitual practice (*sunna*) isn't one of my own.' In this way the Prophet advised the believers and directed them away from the carnal soul's wayward desire. Al-Dabbāgh notes that if a person doesn't perform works of supererogation, he won't be called to account because of this in the hereafter. On the other hand, if he performs such works for the sake of impressing people, he'll be severely punished in the hereafter.

Therefore place your carnal soul on the shaykh's lap like an infant on its mother's lap. The shaykh will impose restrictions on it before it's weaned of his training. Any novice who hasn't been stripped of his will before his shaykh shouldn't hope to catch a whiff of poverty's aroma. Catching a whiff of that aroma is difficult but where there's firm resolve, it can be achieved. But above all, never oppose your shaykh. For the shaykh will then abandon you and hinder you from associating with him.—So much for al-Dabbāgh's comments which al-Lamaṭī found written out in the Shaykh's own copy of the *Rā'iyya*. Now al-Lamaṭī decides to present his own commentary and paraphrase of relevant verses that al-Dabbāgh didn't comment on.

Pp. 691-723. The novice who opposes the shaykh clearly lacks understanding. In the Qur'ān al-Khaḍir is represented as doing things that Moses disapproves of until al-Khaḍir explains the deeper meaning behind his actions. If the disciple contradicts the shaykh regarding the latter's belief, he'll become separated from the shaykh which is like being dropped in a blaze of live coals. The sincere novice is content with no one but his shaykh, even if to all appearances the shaykh seems to have strayed from the truth. Therefore don't recognize anyone else in the shaykh's presence and never look askance at the shaykh. In the meantime, the rays of the shaykh's love will bind the novice to the shaykh and protect him from everything that could cause separation.

Pp. 695-99. Now al-Lamaṭī pauses in his commentary and introduces some stories to illustrate the relationship between the shaykh and the novice. A shaykh's disciples proclaim that they love him dearly. But when he asks them: 'Do I love you?', they reply: 'We don't know.' The shaykh says they have answered very foolishly. In reality the shaykh's love comes first. When the

lights of his love shine on you, only then is your love for him produced. And one of al-Dabbāgh's disciples tells al-Lamaṭī that before meeting al-Dabbāgh he'd gone to Sayyidī Qāsim Abū 'Usriyya's shrine but he immediately felt a stomach pain which only stopped when he came forth from the shrine. He concludes: 'I realized this was due to the Shaykh.'

Another disciple of al-Dabbāgh had felt impeded from visiting the graves of the godly men for almost seven years. No one could explain to him why he was blocked in this way. In the end, al-Dabbāgh tells him that the owner of a bouquet of roses can't give the bouquet to everyone to touch and to hold. It would be spoiled and wither away. He keeps it back from the multitude. The disciple says: 'I realized I'd been stopped from paying visits of respect to anyone besides the Shaykh.'

Another report tells how a disciple associated with a shaykh for seven years and was profoundly in love with him. The shaykh died and the disciple resolved that he'd never acknowledge anyone else in his place. But then the disciple met al-Dabbāgh and after only one moment he felt attached to him and his previous love disappeared. Al-Dabbāgh explains that the first love was for someone who was acting as a surrogate father. If your real father comes along, your heart is swept away and you're no longer bound to the first person. That's why it's been said: 'Novices are like ewers of the bathhouse and these are for whoever grabs hold of them.'

When al-Dabbāgh himself visited the shrines of godly men, his disciples would wait outside. They'd say: 'You're our goal and you're the one whom we pay visits of respect.' After al-Dabbāgh's death, al-Lamaṭī frequently visited his grave but then he saw al-Dabbāgh in a dream. Al-Dabbāgh told him he isn't cut off in the grave but he fills and occupies the entire world. 'You'll find me wherever you seek me.' And other times al-Dabbāgh would say: 'Verily, sometimes the whole world is inside my abdomen.' Thus, in al-Dabbāgh's case, the words: 'Don't recognize anyone else in the shaykh's presence' actually mean don't accord recognition to any other master at all because the 'presence' of our Shaykh comprises the whole world.

Pp. 699-711. Al-Lamaṭī then returns to his commentary. The focus is now on the proper behavior of the novice. One mustn't speak in the shaykh's presence unless he asks you to and then one must be on guard not to talk nonsense. The model for keeping silent before the shaykh is the behavior of the

Companions in the presence of the Prophet. The novice's concern should be to understand what's obscure in his own state. But even in this respect the shaykh takes the initiative, for when the sincere are on hand, the shaykh draws his speech from God. To illustrate the same point, al-Suhrawardī had cited the words of the shaykh Abū Su'ūd who used to tell his disciples: As far as these words, I'm a listener just like any one of you. Indeed, the diver comes back to the surface with oysters in his bag but he can't see them until he comes out of the water. He sees the pearls at the same time that those on the shore see them.

And don't raise your voice in the shaykh's presence and don't shout out loud like the inhabitants of the desert do. The basis for this rule is the Qur'ānic verse: 'Oh believers, don't raise your voices above the Prophet's voice' (49/2). These words were sent down for the education of the Companions. In particular the Companion Thābit b. Qays applied the verse to himself. Due to his respectful behavior toward the Prophet, Thābit had a happy life, died a martyr's death, and was then admitted to Paradise.

Moreover, by no means laugh out loud in the shaykh's presence. There's nothing uglier than this. Laughter is one of the characteristics that distinguish men from animals but, in general, it's difficult to be balanced when it comes to laughter. It's been said: 'Much laughter is a kind of foolishness.' And don't sit cross-legged in front of the shaykh. This is considered a disrespectful posture. And see that your legs are covered up. Next the opinions and personal practice of early pious men regarding how to sit are described. Nor should one roll out a prayer-rug and sit on it. Your purpose is to serve the shaykh. You must adopt humility in his presence, whereas sitting on a prayer-rug implies being equal to him in rank. And while you're still attached to him, you mustn't hold your own assembly in which people turn their eyes toward you. And before having reached the degree of independence, you mustn't wear any of the clothing of shaykhs such as the *farajīyya*. The burnous is the appropriate clothing for the novice.

And don't consider any believer or infidel as lower than yourself. Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī said that to do so is to act with pride. Al-Suhrawardī describes how his own shaykh was sent food by a man of worldly power, and the food was carried on the heads of Frank prisoners in chains. Out of humility the shaykh in question insisted that the Frank prisoners sit down with him and that they eat together. Another anecdote describes the humility of



a pious man who steps aside and walks in mud in order to let a dog pass by on a higher level. He sees himself as a sinner, whereas the dog has never committed a sin. Such humility is recommended since you never know what your final outcome will be. Even those who commit no sins and possess good works fear God's cunning (*makr*).

Ibn al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī al-Ḥātimī says that a human being should believe that God at all times possesses glances into the hearts of His bondsmen. Similarly, if a sinner ceases committing a sin, it's proper behavior to assume he's repented and not to consider oneself better than him. In this connection, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī says that God instills fear into each category of His bondsmen by making one of His elite in a higher category into an exemplary warning, i.e. by punishing someone from among the godly men (*ṣāliḥūn*), the martyrs (*shuhadā'*) and the strictly truthful (*ṣiddiqūn*). Therefore no one finds repose in any of the halting-stations. Al-Ghazzālī cites a certain knower of God who said: 'The novice fears sins, whereas the knower of God fears being afflicted with unbelief (*kufr*).'

Pp. 711-13. At this point al-Dabbāgh tells 'an amazing story'. 'In Mecca...I met Abū'l-Ḥasan 'Alī al-Ṣadghā' al-Hindī...' If he wished to take a step, he'd lift his foot but then his foot would tremble. So he'd set his foot down again and again it would tremble. He couldn't take a single footstep without people saying: 'He's utterly crazy.' And so it was for every one of his voluntary movements. I saw him like this and I asked: 'Oh Abū'l-Ḥasan, what's this situation you're in?' After all, he was one of God's elite Friends. He explained that he can see God's actions throughout the whole of creation and understands the secrets behind God's every action. No secrets are veiled from him except God's actions regarding himself. This situation had led him to believe that God hid this from him so he wouldn't know which of his acts contained his perdition. As a result he was afraid of each and every one of his voluntary actions lest it bring about his destruction. Al-Dabbāgh adds that this kind of vision belongs to all the Friends of God and the prophets.

Pp. 713-23. Al-Lamaṭī then continues his commentary on al-Sharīshī's verses. One must have no regard for what people think. Otherwise, you'll end up preening yourself before them and falling into hypocrisy. Indeed, Bishr the Barefoot said he never knew any man who liked being famous and who didn't end up disgraced. In a similar vein, al-Dabbāgh once told al-

Lamaṭī not to hope for knowledge of God without first knowing the Prophet Muḥammad, and not to hope for knowledge of the Prophet without first knowing his shaykh. 'And let no one hope for knowledge of his shaykh without having recited the prayers for the dead over the people.'

Moreover, the novice mustn't tell anyone about miracles he experiences, except his shaykh. And whatever causes him shame to reveal he imparts by hints and allusions. As for the shaykh, the rules of good behavior require that he guard the novice's secrets. At the same time, the shaykh instills contempt in the novice's carnal soul for what he experiences during spiritual retreat, be it unveiling, hearing speech or any other supernatural events.

And the shaykh protects the disciple. 'One day I complained to him [al-Dabbāgh] about something that happened to me', al-Lamaṭī reports. 'He said to me: "After this it won't befall you and it will never happen to you again." And so the matter turned out. It was as if a wall had been erected between myself and it.' But the proper shaykh also informs the disciple about his own circumstances so he may choose to remain with him or to depart. If the shaykh were silent about these matters, he'd be deceiving the disciple. And one day al-Dabbāgh said to al-Lamaṭī: 'A man who doesn't share in his companion's bad acts is no companion to him.' He added: 'If association is only based on good acts, that isn't association.' And you must consult the shaykh about any unveiling you've been shown. He's pleased when you question him about unveilings.

Al-Suhrawardī points out that unveiling is deceptive and dangerous. Even Hindu sages, philosophers, materialists and monks can experience unveiling. In their case God entices them to their destruction through the delusion of unveiling. The novice therefore has need of the shaykh in this regard if he's to avoid calamity. Returning to al-Sharīshī's verses, al-Lamaṭī comments that the novice shouldn't hold back from recounting a vision (*wāqī'a*) to his shaykh. A *wāqī'a* is a vision about higher reality in the form of a similitude, whereas an unveiling is the appearance of a vision without a similitude. The shaykh then confirms or rejects a novice's vision.

Al-Lamaṭī cites al-Suhrawardī's description of the way his own shaykh would listen to the visions of the disciples and how one of them, a certain Ismā'il, had a vision that involved a piece of paper with thirty circles on it. Thereupon a patron arrived and donated thirty pieces of gold. The shaykh places them on the

circles and says: 'This is shaykh Ismā'īl's donation.' In general, the novice should seek refuge with his shaykh in all important matters. Then he'll attain 'victory'.

Al-Lamaṭī tells al-Dabbāgh: 'I'm in fear of God the Sublime because of things I've done.' Al-Dabbāgh tells him not to be afraid because of those things: '...the greatest of serious sins on your part is that you should pass a moment without my being in your mind.' And al-Dabbāgh would joke with his disciples and remove their sense of shame and speak to them first before they questioned him. He'd even say: 'Don't accord me the status of a shaykh... You won't be able to follow the rules of proper behavior regarding the shaykh's status... Take me to be a brother, and association (*ṣuhba*) will persist between me and you.'

And it's important that you don't consider your actions to be good. Such an attitude corrupts good works. After doing something good, forget about it. If you no longer think about it, this is proof that God has accepted your good action. Likewise, whoever makes progress and reaches a halting-station sees the defects in his actions, and this awareness sets him free. Abū 'Amr Ismā'īl b. Nujayb even said: 'No one's footstep with regard to being God's bondsman is pure until he considers all his actions hypocrisy and all his states mere pretensions.' And here al-Lamaṭī brings his comments on the *Rā'iyya* to a close with two Qur'ānic quotations and the pithy words of two early Sufis that confirm this thought.

Pp. 723-25. Now al-Lamaṭī presents the full name of the author of the *Rā'iyya*. He was born in Salā (581/1185), grew up in Marrakesh and settled in Fayyūm in Egypt where he died (641/1243). Al-Lamaṭī then mentions the well-known scholars al-Sharīshī studied with and finally that he studied Sufism with Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥaṣṣ al-Suhrawardī whose *'Awārif al-ma'ārif* forms the basis for al-Sharīshī's *qaṣīda*.

Pp. 725-29 deal with al-Dabbāgh's spiritual masters. Al-Dabbāgh said: 'I inherited from ten Friends of God.' Sayyidī 'Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī and Sayyidī 'Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī we have already met with. Regarding the latter, al-Dabbāgh notes that he was given to drink the lights of approximately seventy of God's beautiful names. When Sayyidī Yaḥyā is mentioned, al-Lamaṭī informs us that he had the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) over those who pay visits of respect to the godly dead and fulfilled all their requests 'which God had foreordained'. Al-Dabbāgh explains to al-Lamaṭī that many of

the so-called Friends of God that the people recognize and call upon as intermediaries aren't really genuine. In reality it's the hidden people of free disposal who grant their requests. The false Friends are like scarecrows. It isn't they that drive the birds from the standing crops but the owner of the field who set up the effigy.

Al-Dabbāgh relates an anecdote about a traveller who arrives before a mountain trail as night is falling. Two robbers are waiting along the trail to ambush him. 'The man had placed himself under a shaykh who was of no worth.' Now he evokes his shaykh's protection but, fortunately, in his invocation he gives precedence to the rank of the Prophet Muḥammad. 'One of the people with the power of free disposal heard him and he greatly revered the noble Prophet's name...' Though invisible, he kept the man company and God held back the two thieves from doing the man any harm.

The fourth of al-Dabbāgh's spiritual masters was Sayyidī Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad and he had free disposal over affairs of the sea. Al-Dabbāgh says about him that when God bestowed illumination on him, his body would quiver the way some pieces of fresh meat quiver when you slice them. Al-Lamaṭī adds that early on al-Dabbāgh used to tell him so many beneficial lessons from Sayyidī Yaḥyā and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, but he was negligent and unaware of their spiritual rank. He only became aware and began to write things down after they'd both passed away.

The fifth spiritual master was Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj. How al-Dabbāgh came to meet him is described in the Author's Introduction (p. 136), and the story about him and al-Dabbāgh at the spring in Dār Ibn ʿUmar where all the stones and fishes cry out and tell him to fear God and stop fishing occurs in Chapter One (p. 376).

The sixth master was Sayyidī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Miṣrī who was the Support who presided over the Council of the godly men (Dīwān). He appears in several passages in the *Ibrīz* (see Index).

Sayyidī ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-Maghribī who resided in Jabal al-Durūz in Syria is mentioned as his seventh shaykh.

We are told very little about the eighth, ninth and tenth shaykhs: Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Kaymūnī, Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Maghribī and Sayyidī ʿAbd Allāh al-Jarrāz.

Last of all is an eleventh shaykh whom al-Dabbāgh met later than the others. His name was Sayyidī Ibrāhīm Lamlaz and he

came from Algiers. Al-Lamaṭī has trouble remembering his name and al-Dabbāgh scolds him for this. The above are all the 'known' spiritual masters from whom al-Dabbāgh inherited secrets and powers.

Pp. 729-30. Al-Lamaṭī then asks al-Dabbāgh: 'Was there a difference in what you inherited from them?' Al-Dabbāgh replies that it was all knowledge of God but he then offers various similitudes to describe the differences. For instance, it's like one man telling you to proceed on a certain path and you'll find water. Then after you've followed the path for some time, another man completes the information and tells you exactly where the water is located. Or one man catches game for you but another man explains how to cook it and eat it.

Pp. 730-32. On one occasion, a person asked al-Dabbāgh about the benefit of having the litany (*wird*) conferred upon him. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the authentic shaykh has immense vision (*mushāhada*) and if he says out loud the formula: 'There is no god but God!', he also pronounces it in his interior. Consequently, if he implants these words in the novice, his own state pervades the novice and the novice goes on advancing 'until he reaches the shaykh's halting-station'. And al-Dabbāgh offers similitudes to explain the effect of conferring the *dhikr*-formula on the novice. One of them is that doctors tell the king's young son who's ill that he must give up eating meat. But he refuses to do so. One of the doctors then performs a major ritual ablution, invokes God's help and resolves not to eat meat as long as the sick boy doesn't eat it. He then orders the boy: 'Don't eat meat!' The boy straightway obeys and recovers from his illness.

Another similitude about the positive effect of having the *dhikr* conferred on one involves a slave who asks a good man to intercede with his owner about setting him free. The good man intercedes after a year has gone by, and the slave is then freed. The ex-slave asks why he didn't intercede for a whole year. The good man says he doesn't ask people to do something unless he's done it himself. He had to work and save money in order to buy a slave. He then set the slave free and asked the first slave's master to do the same thing. If he'd spoken to him before that, the slave owner wouldn't have consented to his request.

Pp. 732-35. Al-Dabbāgh then talks about God's mightiest name. Added to the ninety-nine beautiful names of God, it completes the number one hundred and includes many of the meanings contained in the other ninety-nine. 'You hear it emerge

from the body like the ringing of brass.' It's very burdensome for the body to pronounce 'because it only occurs with complete vision (*mushāhada*).' 'If the body utters it, the entire world is terrified... Jesus, the son of Mary, possessed the power to utter it and he uttered it fourteen times a day.' And in connection with the beautiful names, al-Dabbāgh also said: 'The prophets... acquired the meanings of the names through visions.' Thus Idris (Enoch), for instance, was the first to devise the names: Omniscient, Omnipotent, Almighty and Beneficent.

But it was Adam who first devised the name Allāh (*ism al-jalāla*). And that was immediately after God breathed His spirit into him. Adam stood on one leg, while supporting himself on his other knee. He then experienced an immense vision. Next God caused him to utter a word which conveyed the secrets he beheld from the Lofty Essence (*al-dhāt al-ʿaliyya*). If the Prophet Muḥammad devised names based on the visions he experienced, whoever heard them would dissolve. Moreover, the word Allāh contains three secrets. The first is that God's creatures aren't subject to limit. Besides humans, the Jinn and animals, there are other categories that people don't know about. The second secret is that God exercises the power of free disposal over them as He wishes. He makes everything the way it is. He has free choice; His creatures do not. And the third secret is that God is all-holy and transcendent.

Divine transcendence means that God is different from anything that can be conceived in thought. 'For thought only conceives of something that's been created.' At this point al-Lamaṭī interjects: 'But thought can conceive of a human being turned upside down who walks on his head.' Al-Dabbāgh replies that he's seen someone like that. 'He covered his genitals with his hand which was like a veil for him. He only removed his hand if he wished to attend to his [basic] needs, whether defecating or sexual intercourse.' Indeed, al-Dabbāgh continues: 'One day I was seated with Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baṣrāwī and he said to me: "Come, let's imagine in our thoughts the strangest form and then look among God's creatures to see whether it exists or not." Then he said: "Let's imagine a creature that walks on four feet and has the form of a camel. Its entire back is mouths like mouths the crab has on its side. And on its back is a minaret... At the top...are balconies from one of which it urinates and defecates. From another...it drinks and in between the balconies is the form of a human being with his head, his face

and all his limbs.” He’d barely finished describing it when we beheld this creature and there was a great number of them.’

Pp. 735-37. Al-Dabbāgh says about vision (*mushāhada*) that most people are incapable of it. Before he attained illumination himself, he’d asked a Friend to invoke God to bestow on him vision of Himself. The Friend told him: ‘Don’t seek vision from God the Sublime until He bestows it on you without your asking.’ Otherwise, you won’t be able to sustain it. But al-Dabbāgh persists in his request. The Friend tells him he must first be able to visualize each world in its entirety, one after the other: the world of human beings, the world of the angels, Paradise, Hell, etc.—in a single glance! Al-Dabbāgh wept when he realized he couldn’t sustain such a vision. Similarly, those who wish to see the Prophet in a waking state must first be able to see all these worlds, though not in a single glance.

Al-Lamaṭī follows this with a similitude about the bondsman not being able to sustain knowledge of God the way He really is. ‘If God the Sublime provided vessels of clay with understanding and someone were to ask them about their maker, the master craftsman who produced them—what he’s like, about his height and his complexion, about his reason and understanding, etc.’, they wouldn’t be capable of such knowledge. ‘A made thing is never able to know the attributes of its maker as he really is.’

Pp. 737-41. Concerning the *dhikr*, al-Dabbāgh said: ‘Performing the recollection of God (*dhikr*) is more burdensome for the body than worship.’ Recollection of God gives the body light to drink but it doesn’t want to accept the light because of the darkness the body contains. The light wants to transform the body’s nature and make it abandon its reality, like someone attempting to put a man’s nature in a woman or a woman’s nature in a man, or like someone who wants to put the taste of wheat and its pleasantness in some other grain. ‘Don’t ask what contriving and confusion this entails!’ Worship, on the other hand, only occupies the body’s exterior. It’s like doing work with a hoe. It merely causes physical fatigue.

As for the names of God, there’s a name which if the bondsman is given its light to drink will cause him to weep continually. And there’s another such name whose light will cause him to laugh continually, as if a group of sixty people are tickling him after removing his clothes. Different people are given the light of different names to drink. But no time is more difficult for the Friend of God than when he’s given the lights of

the names to drink—because of his body's disruption amid the demands of the names. 'Every name demands something that contradicts what another name demands.'

When al-Lamaṭī first asked al-Dabbāgh how many names he'd been given to drink, he replied ninety-seven. But al-Lamaṭī then adds: 'At the end of his affair I heard him say...that he'd been given the complete number to drink, I mean the hundred.' If you request something from God with the hundreth name, He'll grant it to you. But only the Support completes all one hundred. That's in 'the halting-station of the secret'. In 'the halting-station of the spirit' only the Prophet completes the hundred. And al-Dabbāgh adds that for those who use God's names in their litanies (*awrād*) and in recollecting God (*dhikr*) it's important that a knower of God (*ʿārif*) has conferred the name on them along with its light. Otherwise, without its light, Satan will be present and cause harm to the bondsman. Al-Dabbāgh then mentions some particular names of God from among the surahs *Yā-Sīn*, *Ṣād* and *The Kingdom* that are good to recite against poverty, sickness, injury, etc.

Pp. 741-42. On the subject of the ecstatic dance (*ḥaḍra*), al-Dabbāgh states that it didn't exist during the first three generations of Islam. And this accords with what the religious scholars have affirmed. Al-Dabbāgh then notes that in the fourth generation four or five Friends of God who were endowed with illumination and had disciples and followers were in fact the origin of the ecstatic dance. They observed how angels worship God and are engaged in recollection. Al-Dabbāgh explains: 'There are some angels...who recollect God with their tongue and their whole body. You see their body swaying to the right and to the left, and swaying forward and backward.' These few Friends, while absent in beholding God, unconsciously imitated the angels. But this was a sign of their weakness, and their followers adorned themselves in this 'external attire'. When this first small group of Friends of God passed away, 'the people of external attire' then occupied themselves with the ecstatic dance. Indeed, they increased its movement and added musical instruments.

Pp. 742-43. Turning to deeper vision (*baṣīra*), al-Dabbāgh mentions that it contains three hundred and sixty-six thousand parts. Only one of its parts is in the eye; the rest are in the body of the Friend of God who's the perfect heir. He sees with his whole body the way one of us sees with his eye. Then someone who was present told of a miracle that involved al-Dasūqī in



Egypt. He invited ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī and Aḥmad al-Rifāʿī to join him immediately which they did, though they were located in ʿIrāq. Al-Dabbāgh comments that this is something the weakest among the Friends of God can do.

In this connection, al-Dabbāgh says that he met a Friend of God who had attained a lofty halting-station. '...he beheld the created beings who possess speech and who are mute, the wild beasts, insects, the heavens and the stars, the earths and what they contain, and the whole orb of the world took sustenance from him. He heard its voices and its speech in a single instant. He provided each being with what it needed and gave it what was proper for it, without one thing distracting him from another. Indeed, the highest and the lowest part of the world was like someone who's in one space for him.' But this Friend said: 'When I see that support comes from someone other than myself, I feel I'm like a [lowly] frog. All mankind is stronger and more capable than me.' Al-Lamaṭī then adds: '...this was the characteristic of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—who was the Support of the age and under whom were the seven Pivots.'

Pp. 743-44. Finally, al-Lamaṭī tells how al-Dabbāgh once said to him: 'I see the seven heavens and earths and the Celestial Throne within my body and it's the same for the Seventy Veils located above the Throne...and all of this is filled with the noble angels. And it's the same for the world of Raqqā located above the Seventy Veils. Now all of these created beings only experience something in their thought, not to speak of their bodily limbs, with permission from a man whom God the Sublime has shown mercy.' (God showing someone mercy can mean giving the person access to higher levels of illumination. Al-Dabbāgh is here referring to himself as the Support of his age.)

Al-Lamaṭī's final question to al-Dabbāgh at the close of Chapter Six is: 'The Prophet's inheritance...consists of one hundred and twenty-four thousand bodies. Why doesn't the Support inherit them all?' Al-Dabbāgh replies that 'the meaning of inheritance with regard to the Support is that no one has drunk from the Prophet's body...like the body of the Support has—God be pleased with him!'

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**Chapter Seven** first presents al-Dabbāgh's comments and interpretations of the words of spiritual masters such as Ibn

Mashīsh, Ibn al-Fāriḍ and al-Ghazzālī that al-Lamaṭī found to be unclear (pp. 747-78). The remaining part of the chapter then deals with the rather compact argumentation of the centuries-old debate around al-Ghazzālī's assertion: 'There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is (*laysa fī'l-imkān abda<sup>c</sup> mimma kān*).'

In section [1] al-Dabbāgh explains the sense of the following words in Ibn Mashīsh's invocation of blessings on the Prophet: 'Oh Lord God, bless him from whom the secrets have burst forth!' The secrets include such phenomena as springs, rivers, trees, flowers, the stability of the earth, the heavens remaining suspended aloft, and Adam's offspring being endowed with supple joints. When God wished to bring forth these and other good things, he sent great numbers of angels to invoke blessings on the Prophet. Also contained in the meaning of these words is a reference to the fact that if it weren't for the Prophet's light, no difference would appear between the dwellers in Paradise and those in Hell-fire. When God created the Prophet's light, the difference between the people who accepted God and those who were averse to Him became known in God's pre-eternal knowledge. Thus the difference in ranks and their diversity is the meaning of 'the secrets have burst forth'.

Al-Dabbāgh also offers a mythical explanation. Let's imagine that in the case of the Prophet vision is like a piece of cloth and in that cloth every possible craftsman has produced something from his craft. The Prophet 'has drunk' the cloth. When he drank the threads of the silk-maker, God bestowed on him knowledge of everything that forms the basis of the silk-maker's craft. And so it is for all the other crafts and professions. Thus the Prophet's secret contains all the forms of knowledge that existed in God the Sublime's will in pre-eternity. And all the secrets of the prophets, the Friends of God and everyone else were taken from the secret of our lord Muḥammad. As for the vision (*mushāhada*) the Prophet has experienced, his body contains everything that accompanies that vision and his body is provided with all its secrets: '...mercy toward people, love for them, forgiving them, pardon and clemency, invoking God for their benefit...'

Indeed, the Prophet's body contains the lights of God's beautiful names along with their secrets: 'the light of patience, the light of mercy, the light of clemency, the light of forgiveness..., and so on, until we've covered all the beautiful names.' Whatever secrets have been distributed among the bodies of the angels, the

prophets and the Friends of God is because they were given a drink which reached them from the Prophet's noble body. If it weren't for the blood in our human bodies which impedes our knowledge of the reality of things, the previous prophets would have only spoken about our Prophet's affair and how all their assistance came from him.

Regarding Ibn Mashīsh's words: 'And the lights sprang forth', al-Dabbāgh said: 'The first thing God...created was the light of our lord Muḥammad... From it He created the Pen, the Seventy Veils, their angels, and then He created the Tablet. And before the Tablet was finished and completely formed, He created the Throne, the spirits, Paradise and Barzakh.' After describing the creation of the Celestial Throne, al-Dabbāgh gives a detailed account of the creation of the seven earths and the seven heavens, followed by accounts of the creation of other essential parts of the cosmos: Hell, Paradise, Barzakh, the Pen, the Seventy Veils and the [Well-guarded] Tablet. All these were either formed directly from the Prophet's light or a secondary light derived from his revered light.

After their creation, all the above cosmic phenomena were once again given to drink of the Prophet's light, but varying amounts and a varying number of times. For instance, the prophets were first given to drink of the Prophet's light in the world of the spirits when God created the lights of the spirits as a totality. Secondly, they were given to drink of the Prophet's light when they were fashioned individually from the totality of their light. Thirdly, on the day of: 'Am I not your Lord?' (7/172), everyone who answered affirmatively from among the prophets and the believers was given different amounts of the Prophet's light to drink. Fourthly, the believer is given to drink of the noble light in his mother's womb, otherwise his joints won't be supple. Fifthly, he's given to drink of the noble light when he comes out of his mother's womb, otherwise he won't be able to eat food with his mouth. Sixthly, when he first breast-feeds at his mother's breast, and seventhly when the spirit is breathed into him. Indeed, the spirit wouldn't enter his body, if not for the Prophet's noble light being in it. Finally, he's given to drink of the noble light the eighth time when his body is fashioned again on the Resurrection. This causes his new body to become firm.

The reason that the Muslim community constitutes: 'The best community ever brought forth to men' (3/110) is because it was given to drink of the Prophet's noble light after the light had

entered his pure body. The Prophet then received such perfection as can't be described because the noble light acquired the secrets of the pure spirit as well as the secret of his pure body.

And al-Dabbāgh explains the differences between the prophets Jesus, Abraham and Moses in terms of the spiritual halting-station that goes with the special qualities of the noble light they were given to drink. After this he describes the difference between angels, prophets, Friends of God and ordinary believers, as far as the relation of their bodies and spirits to light. The connection between their constituent light and the light of our Prophet Muḥammad is expressed in al-Dabbāgh's similitude of starved cats that all devour a piece of bread that's thrown to them. However, the piece of bread doesn't diminish even by so much as a nail clipping. Moreover, 'the lights of the sun, the moon and the stars draw assistance from the light of Barzakh, and the light of Barzakh draws assistance from the revered light and from the light of the spirits that are in it, and the light of the spirits draws assistance from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

After their creation: 'The angels and the spirits were serving God the Sublime when suddenly the lights appeared in the sun, the moon and the stars. The angels who are on the earth then fled from the light of the sun toward the shadow of night.' All of them, the angels of the earth and of the heavens, and the spirits, gathered together on that night. But when they saw that the light of the sun caused no harm, they felt safe and returned to their posts. They then did this every year and such is the origin of the Night of Power.

Commenting on Ibn Mashīsh's words: 'In him advanced the realities', al-Dabbāgh says that 'realities' means the three hundred and sixty-six secrets which God has distributed throughout creation. This is a usefulness in a plant or a mineral. In the people of vision (*mushāhada*) it's the fact that they're never forgetful of God even for the blinking of an eye. In the strictly righteous (*ṣiddīq*) it's truthfulness (*ṣidq*). All these realities have advanced in the Prophet to a level no one else can support. 'The progressive development of the realities is in proportion to how much someone or something has been given to drink of God the Sublime's light.'

Then commenting on Ibn Mashīsh's words: 'Adam's sciences descended', al-Dabbāgh says 'Adam's sciences' means what he acquired of the names that God taught him, as referred to in the

Qurʾān: ‘And He taught Adam the names, all of them’ (2/31). And here it’s a question of the ‘ascending names’, i.e. the name by which one understands something’s origin, its benefit, and how its shape and structure were produced. This is true of a simple hoe, and it’s also true of all the layers of the heavens, the angels and Paradise. Adam understood what Paradise was created from, the ordering of its degrees, its Ḥūrīs, the people who will dwell in it after the Resurrection, and so on.

These sciences are said to have ‘descended’ in order to distinguish between the Prophet’s knowledge and that of Adam and the other prophets. If Adam turned his attention to these sciences, he was then distracted from his vision of God. Our Prophet, on the other hand, can focus on all these forms of knowledge while at the same time maintaining his vision of God. The Prophet’s superiority in this respect accounts for why: ‘He rendered creatures incapable and because of it understandings grew weak... And from among us no predecessor has comprehended him, nor will anyone who comes after him.’ Likewise, ‘and the meadows of the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*) provoke admiration by means of the flower of his beauty, and the water basins of the Realm of Omnipotence (*jabarūt*) gush with the outpourings of his lights’. Al-Dabbāgh offers further theosophical exegesis of these symbolically charged words. At the same time he explains the terms: the World of Dominion, the World of the Celestial Realm and the World of the Realm of Omnipotence.

And al-Dabbāgh describes the difference between the lights that radiate from the Well-guarded Tablet, the Pen, Barzakh, Paradise and the Throne, all these phenomena being in the Celestial Realm or the translunar world. Since the lights vary, likening them to meadows containing a variety of flowers is appropriate. But al-Dabbāgh’s commentary is cut short because of the presence of someone who didn’t believe in the Shaykh and ‘didn’t speak his language’. Finally, by way of bringing section [1] to a close, al-Dabbāgh comments on Ibn Mashīsh’s words: ‘Oh Lord, join me to his lineage (*nasab*) and fulfill me through his noble descent (*ḥasab*).’ He says that ‘lineage’ means the vision established in the Prophet’s interior, and the meaning of ‘noble descent’ is his attributes such as mercy, science, clemency, etc., from among his chaste character traits. And another time al-Dabbāgh interpreted ‘fulfill me through his noble descent’ as: ‘what was loaded onto

him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and what he carried.’

In section [2] al-Dabbāgh attempts to explain al-Shādhilī’s words in *al-Hizb al-kabīr*: ‘It’s not nobility only to do good to someone who’s done good to You.’ Al-Shādhilī was speaking on the basis of his vision of God’s immense mercy, and due to his weakness these words emerged from his body. This is comparable to a man going before a noble king and, because of feeling uneasy and confused, saying: ‘If you don’t give me a gift, you aren’t a generous man!’

In section [3] al-Lamaṭī reports what al-Dabbāgh said was the meaning of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s verses:

‘We drank a wine in recollection of the beloved  
That made us drunk before the grapevine’s creation.’

Al-Dabbāgh begins by saying: ‘This is a reference to something in the world of the spirits, and the meaning of the beloved is our Prophet... Recollection of him in that world is a cause of obtaining complete vision.’ Then he explains: ‘...likening this vision to wine is appropriate for three reasons: 1) wine is a cause of transference from one state to another... 2) Wine is a cause of being cut off from the first state, and this vision is like that. 3) Wine is a cause of bravery, daring and fearlessness because if wine rises in the drinker’s head, everyone becomes contemptible in his eyes.’ And ‘which made us drunk’ means due to it we were cut off from everything other than God the Sublime, while ‘before the grapevine’s creation’ refers to this having happened in the world of the spirits, whereas the grapevine was created in the world of visible shapes.

Next al-Dabbāgh remarks: ‘I never cease to be amazed at the Friend of God who says: “Verily, I fill the universe!” For the universe has a door ‘through which access to it occurs, and the door is the Prophet’. However, no creature in creation is able to sustain his light. But if someone is too weak to sustain the door, how can he sustain anything else besides the door, unless his illumination is satanic and laden with darkness. Al-Lamaṭī says: ‘Perhaps he means he fills it with respect to light, that is to say he fills it with his light, not with his body—the way the sun shines upon the heavens and the earth.’ Al-Dabbāgh retorts: ‘But then what a difference there is between his light and the light of the Chosen One!’ That person’s light compared with the Prophet’s light is like a wick in the midst of day at noontime. ‘Is it proper to say: “This wick has eclipsed the light of the sun.”?’

[4] Al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the story of the man who descended into the Tigris River and then emerged after an hour. He told his companion that he'd been in Egypt, resided there for several months, and had a wife and child there. Al-Lamaṭī asks how this can be possible because shortening time isn't like shortening space but brings with it certain difficulties. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'Nothing's impossible for God the Sublime.' And he adds: 'I've seen something even more strange than this. I saw a person during mid-morning who hadn't yet married and when I returned at noon to the same place, I found the person had died. And I found his son had replaced him in his trade and the son had already become an adult...'

Then al-Dabbāgh describes a waking vision he experienced after the death of his mother. 'I dozed off slightly and I saw everything that would happen to me until my allotted time was up. I saw the shaykhs I was going to meet and the woman I'd marry.' And he sees the sons and daughter he's going to have, and everything that would occur until his death—all within a brief moment.

Next al-Dabbāgh tells the following story as being similar to that about the man who entered the river and was in Egypt. A certain knower of God passed by a place and wished for a city to be there in which God...would be worshipped. God then ordered angels to descend in the form of human beings and He said to the city: 'Be!', and it was. The city persisted and its inhabitants went on worshipping God until the knower of God passed away. 'Then everything reverted to its origin. The angels returned to their posts and the city returned to pure non-existence.'

Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī says in one of his visions that he beheld Paradise in such-and-such a place, i.e. somewhere other than its actual place. Al-Dabbāgh replied that for the knower of God there's no more noble place among places and times than the place where that vision occurs. God is rewarding him by creating a Paradise in the vicinity of the knower of God.

And again by way of confirming the creation of those people in the sight of the man who entered the river, al-Dabbāgh said: 'Look at this air which is located between you and me.' He indicated a place within it that was one finger wide. Then he said that God orders this amount of air to expand. He places many colors in it: yellow, red, green and black, and then veils the first amount of air from the second amount. He then makes a part of the first air enter this second amount of air and causes it to see the

wonders and colors it contains. Finally, He returns that part to the first air to its original place, and the second air disappears with everything that was in it. 'Or is our Lord...not capable of this and more than this?'

In section [5] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the following words of al-Ghazzālī in the *Iḥyā'*: 'Our lord Gabriel is more knowledgeable than the chief of the first and the last...' Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'If our lord Gabriel lived a hundred thousand years...and for an infinity, he wouldn't grasp a quarter of the divine insights of the Prophet...' Since Gabriel and all the angels were created from the Prophet's light, they derive divine insight from him. Now the beloved (Muḥammad) was with the Beloved (God) when Gabriel and everything else were still non-existent. So how do these words make sense? Al-Dabbāgh adds: '...Gabriel was created in order to serve the Prophet...and to be among the guardians of his noble person... All existing things draw assistance from him and have need of beholding him.'

Al-Lamaṭī asks why the noble spirit of the Prophet should need a companion. Al-Dabbāgh replies that the body doesn't see the spirit as being separated from it. Oneness is only for God alone. 'Everyone else is one of a pair that seeks its other half and is inclined toward it.' But Gabriel didn't have the strength to follow the Prophet beyond the Lote-tree of the Extremity, i.e. into the Seventy Veils that are located above it—because of the power of the lights there.

In section [6] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh why the *takbīr al-ʿid* is seven times during the first *rakʿa* and six times during the second *rakʿa*. Al-Dabbāgh explains that during the first *rakʿa* each *takbīr* pronounced by the bondsman causes him to see a particular heaven and earth with the things they contain as well as Him Who fashioned them. And there are seven heavens and earths. During the second *rakʿa* each *takbīr* causes the bondsman to see what was created on each day of the week as well as Him Who fashioned these things. Thus the first *takbīr* causes him to see what was created on Sunday, and so on up to the sixth day, Friday. After that God rested. Al-Dabbāgh adds: 'We aren't talking here about someone who's been given illumination.' But if the bondsman persists over the years in visualizing during the festival (*ʿid*) what's been mentioned, God won't disappoint him. Before he dies, God will cause him to see these visions in all their particulars.



Then al-Lamaṭī asks: ‘What’s the secret of the *takbīr* three times after the fifteen religious duties from noon on the Day of Immolation until dawn of the fourth day?’ Al-Dabbāgh replies that in the first *takbīr* the bondsman sees the formation of the body as a drop of sperm, then as a clot of blood, and then as a lump of flesh. In the second *takbīr* he sees its complete formation and perfection, the excellence of its creation, the spirit’s being breathed into it, and how it finally becomes another created being. And in the third *takbīr* he sees the decomposition of the [human] form and its return to being earth when it’s in the grave. And al-Dabbāgh adds: ‘The person who’s received illumination sees these states directly and sees them openly.’

Al-Dabbāgh goes on to say that God’s wonders among His creatures are very numerous. Should anyone who’s received illumination experience some change or constriction (*qabḍ*), he looks at these wonders and obtains indescribable knowledge of God’s Oneness (*tawḥīd*). There are wonders on the surface of the earth such that if the masters of proofs and arguments beheld them, they’d have no need for proof of God’s Unicity.

In section [7] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī’s words: ‘We’ve plunged into oceans on whose shores the prophets came to a halt.’ Al-Dabbāgh replies that Abū Yazīd knew that the chief of existence (Muḥammad) is the chief of the prophets and the leader of the dispatched apostles, and the best of all God’s creatures. But it may be that the Prophet lends some item of clothing to certain perfect men of his noble community, and if they wear it, they experience what Abū Yazīd said. In reality, however, it’s the Prophet who plunges into those oceans and is the head of all the prophets. It’s an error current among some Friends of God who’ve received illumination that the Friend who’s a great knower of God may attain the halting-station of a prophet with regard to divine knowledge. This is contrary to the truth of the matter. The Friend doesn’t even come close to what the prophet attains.

In section [8] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about the following words ascribed to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī: ‘There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is (*laysa fī’l-imkān abda‘ mim mā kān*).’ Al-Dabbāgh replies: ‘Divine omnipotence isn’t restricted and there’s nothing the Lord can’t do—He is sublime and exalted!’ Al-Lamaṭī approves of these words of the Shaykh as containing the greatest perfection and divine knowledge (*‘irfān*). He then states why he feels it’s his

duty to write on this capital question and to explain why al-Dabbāgh's answer in fact comprises an article of faith.

By way of preparing the terrain for the debate to come, al-Lamaṭī first cites all the Qur'ānic passages that indicate that God is capable of bringing forth something 'more wonderful than what is' (pp. 778-80). And he follows these quotations with a *ḥadīth* that says the Prophet on his deathbed was going to write a book that would stop his community from going astray, but 'Umar said the Qur'ān was enough. Presumably, the world would have been 'more wonderful' had the Prophet left behind this other book. Finally, he cites six variants of an important *ḥadīth* which suggests that the Muslim community could have been spared the disastrous disagreement that has marred its political and doctrinal history—a further example of 'a more wonderful' way the world might have been (pp. 780-86).

Al-Lamaṭī mentions that when he'd question ordinary Muslims about whether God was capable of creating a better world than this one, they'd reply that God is able to do anything He wants. On the other hand, the religious scholars were often blinded by the great reputation of al-Ghazzālī and didn't immediately understand the implications of his controversial assertion, at least not until al-Lamaṭī pointed it out to them. Only then would they endorse God's absolute omnipotence and the infinite nature of His capabilities (pp. 786-87).

On page 787 al-Lamaṭī begins his presentation of the debate on God's omnipotence by quoting a lengthy passage from al-Ghazzālī's *Iḥyā'* in which al-Ghazzālī argues that the world as God has created it is the best of all possible worlds. If God could have created a better world but chose not to do so, this would amount to miserliness on His part which would contradict His generosity. If God were unable to create a perfect world, it would mean He was incapable which would contradict His omnipotence. Any apparent imperfections, such as disease and preordained punishment in Hell, are explained away as being essential and necessary for the overall good.

Al-Lamaṭī notes that religious scholars have responded three different ways to the position put forward by al-Ghazzālī. One group disapproves of it and rejects it outright. A second group attempts to explain it as being acceptable, and a third group denies that al-Ghazzālī ever really held such a view. Al-Lamaṭī then mentions some of the scholars of **the first group**: Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī who claims to refute al-Ghazzālī with his own words,

Ibn al-Munayyir al-Iskandarī who says al-Ghazzālī has gone astray because of using the methods of the philosophers and the Muʿtazilites, and the two scholars Kamāl al-Dīn b. Abī Sharīf and Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī.

On page 792 al-Lamaṭī sets out to review the explanations and defense of al-Ghazzālī provided by scholars of **the second group**. This is the longest section in the debate and includes the views of such well-known scholars as al-Shaʿrānī, Aḥmad Zarrūq, and al-Suyūṭī—all of whom al-Lamaṭī refutes. Then on page 803 he presents his primary opponent in this dispute, al-Samhūdī, who has written a work that defends al-Ghazzālī against the criticism of Ibn al-Munayyir. Al-Lamaṭī devotes far greater space to refuting al-Samhūdī than to refuting any of the previously mentioned scholars. The weaknesses he attacks in al-Samhūdī come under three points or headings: **point one** has to do with ‘the circular argument’ al-Samhūdī uses in defending al-Ghazzālī, **point two** exposes the error of al-Samhūdī’s rationally construed good and bad, and **point three** asserts that he hasn’t properly understood Ibn Munayyir’s sound arguments.

In the context of point two the debate enters into its most dense argumentation. Allusion is made to teachings of the Muʿtazilites in connection with their rational explanation of good and bad. This view is categorically rejected by al-Lamaṭī. And certain doctrines of the Ḥanafites that al-Samhūdī attempts to apply in justifying al-Ghazzālī are interpreted differently by al-Lamaṭī under the headings: **the first reason** and **the second reason**. The density and allusiveness of al-Lamaṭī’s presentation make this whole section difficult for anyone other than the informed specialist. At the same time, it reveals a side of al-Lamaṭī’s education that is markedly different from what we’ve hitherto come to know of him.

When al-Lamaṭī treats **the third group** on page 821, he sets himself the task of demonstrating from different writings of al-Ghazzālī that the latter didn’t really hold the view expressed in the controversial words ascribed to him. Emphasis in the passages al-Lamaṭī cites is on the fact that God doesn’t act out of necessity and if He hasn’t created a more wonderful world, though He’s perfectly capable of doing so, this is simply a manifestation of his free will. God wasn’t being miserly because He didn’t create the world sooner than He did, nor is He miserly because He doesn’t create a more wonderful one right now despite His having the

ability to do so. God renders good service through His bounty, but not as an obligation.

In bringing Chapter Seven to a close, al-Lamaṭī tells us: 'I've treated this question at length and turned my attention to the contradiction in the previous answers regarding it because I saw that most people are ignorant...and in criticizing it rely on what Abū Ḥāmid...has promulgated about it. Abū Ḥāmid [himself] says in his book *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*—God be pleased with him: "This is the usual practice of those with weak minds. They know the truth through the eminent men and not the eminent men through the truth."

In a kind of postscript to the debate he's outlined for us, al-Lamaṭī informs us that al-Dabbāgh protected him from al-Ghazzālī. 'That is to say, when I resolved to refute this question and to show its falsity and explain the evil of its absurdity, the Shaykh stood before me...and filled my heart with reverence for Abū Ḥāmid... In fact nothing occurred on my tongue—praise be to God—but veneration and respect for Abū Ḥāmid.' Though al-Dabbāgh was now dead, he brought this about by appearing to him in a dream. Al-Lamaṭī specifies: 'I beheld him—God be pleased with him—and I was aware he was dead and I was myself between sleep and waking.' Al-Dabbāgh informs him that al-Ghazzālī is one of the great Friends of God and a Pivot. Al-Dabbāgh and he keep company together and al-Ghazzālī asks him questions about sciences that are needed in the hereafter. Al-Lamaṭī says: 'I arose in the morning and—praise be to God—an immense love entered into me for Abū Ḥāmid—God have mercy on him—and nothing of the harshness of what I expressed in any way did him harm.'

.....

In **Chapter Eight** al-Lamaṭī reports what al-Dabbāgh said about the creation of Adam and 'the graduated stages of his affair', as well as how Adam's offspring are the most excellent of created beings and possess the most excellent of shapes.

Pp. 828-30. For ten days God collected the dust from which to create Adam. He then left it in water for twenty days, formed it for another forty days, and finally left it for twenty days to develop from a clay state into a corporeal state. Then God breathed His breath into Adam. This took place in Paradise where He also created Eve. After they'd been in Paradise for two months, carnal desire was infused into them and Adam had intercourse with Eve. After only three months from the time of

her conceiving, Eve gave birth, though afterwards when she became pregnant on earth, she gave birth after nine months.

Adam's dust was from all the metals: gold, silver, copper and other metals. The angels collected all the dust, especially Gabriel because God had promised him that he'd be the companion of someone made from dust who was the dearest of all creatures to God. The amount of dust gathered was a quantity large enough to cover almost a mile of land.

Al-Lamaṭī asks why it took ten days to gather Adam's dust since God has the power to gather it in one instant. Al-Dabbāgh replies that God could have created the world in one instant instead of taking six days and He could have created Adam without using dust. But God chose to create some things by stages so that the Heavenly Host (angels) would turn its attention to the event in expectation and astonishment. As a result, the angels acquired an awesome knowledge of God's Oneness (*tawḥīd*) through an awareness of His dazzling omnipotence. This was the wisdom behind the procedure by stages.

And al-Dabbāgh explains that the water Adam's dust was placed in was special and contained a benefit for Adam's body. The water in question had flowed over most parts of the earth and acquired the secrets of all those parts. It arose from a spring in the land of Syria where Adam's dust had been collected. Moreover, the spring still exists today and possesses a unique wholesomeness for the body.

While Adam was in the mud and nothing of him was visible, something like a boil appeared on his fingers. Eventually it burst and its matter spread over his limbs and congealed, becoming like the pith of a palm-tree—moist and fresh. When Adam's form was fashioned in this way, the qualities of blood entered into him and the wind caused the mud to dry and flake off of him. Now his bodily parts and his bones formed. God then elevated him to the first Paradise and breathed His spirit into him. Reason and knowledge entered into him and he became aware of God.

Pp. 830-33. Adam attempted to stand up but he trembled and fell like an infant. God then provided him with [higher] vision (*mushāhada*). Thereupon Adam said: 'Allāh, Allāh, Allāh! There is no god but God. Muḥammad is the Apostle of God.' Adam then stood up and began to walk about in Paradise. God next caused something like an abscess to form in Adam's rib. A small body emerged from it and the fragrant breezes of Paradise helped it to grow rapidly. God cast reason into the body and Eve was

then capable of conversing with Adam. Adam had intercourse with Eve and she gave birth within the time mentioned. God had raised Adam up to Paradise so his body would be given to drink of the lights of Paradise and thereby his progeny wouldn't forget the covenant of the day of: 'Am I not your Lord?' (7/172).

The tree that God forbade Adam to eat from was the fig-tree, because the fig-tree as well as other fruit-trees in Paradise cause a bowel movement in whoever eats from them. The other foods and fruits of Paradise, though they assume visible shape, are lights without any weight to them, and therefore they don't cause a bowel movement.

Before Adam ate from the tree, his mind was attached to his Lord and indifferent to his own advantages. Afterwards, when he'd eaten from the tree, he experienced a bowel movement and felt hunger and had to provide sustenance for himself.

Pp. 833-35. Once Adam had been elevated to Paradise, God created all the animals that Adam had need of for his livelihood. God then sent a great rain which caused what was left of Adam's original mud to expand and multiply. From this mud the animals derived immense benefit and when Adam came down to earth again, he found the animals prospering and roaming over the land.

Of all the creatures God created, Adam's offspring have the most handsome physique. 'If an intelligent person reflects on the divisions in a human being's body, the structure of its parts, the ordering of its joints and its veins, the beauties that God's fashioning includes both in the body's exterior and its interior, he'll be astonished and realize the awesomeness of the One Who created it and shaped it.'

An angel's body consists solely of light and has had reason installed in it, whereas the human body includes light, reason and the spirit, as well as kinds of earth, fire, wind and water. Moreover, each of these is a secret which God has decreed. Therefore the human body is the strongest of bodies. That's why our Prophet and our lord, Muḥammad, was formed with a human body. Indeed, he's the strongest of created beings with regard to bearing the Lordly secrets.

Pp. 835-37. Despite the human body being the most handsome of bodies, God has decided that one group of humans will enter Hell-fire. In the body God placed the spirit and its secret which is reason, as well as the light of belief in Him and divine vision (*mushāhada*). But when He wished to carry out His threat, He

placed a veil over the body and divine vision disappeared. The result was that the body of the person without divine vision experienced estrangement. In that state, the body looked at the thread of the light of reason and became attached to it, making it its support in all things. 'This increased its estrangement because the body looked at reason as if it came from itself, as if it originated with the body, and it depended on reason in all its affairs. Thus reason increased the body's self-reliance and its separation from God...'

Since the body became attached to reason, God sent apostles to lead it back to the path of knowledge. One group responded and retreated from adhering to reason, whereas another group expressed denial and chose extreme attachment to reason and complete adherence to it.

Al-Lamaʿī asks whether the veil that's been imposed on divine vision consists of the blood. Al-Dabbāgh replies that it's something else, namely a darkness from the darkness of Hell that the body becomes wrapped in. This veils the body from knowing the truth.

Pp. 837-38. Al-Dabbāgh's final words in Chapter Eight concern the group who renounce their attachment to reason and respond positively to God's prophets. They fall into two categories, that of the ordinary believers and then those who receive illumination. As for the nature of illumination, one kind comes to a halt and another kind goes on increasing. Al-Dabbāgh offers a similitude to illustrate this difference. One beggar is content if he receives a *mawzūna* from a rich man, whereas another beggar, no matter how much he receives, keeps asking for more. 'If we suppose this rich man is generous, and that his treasures don't become exhausted and don't diminish, and we suppose the beggar goes on forever asking for more, then his having a gift bestowed on him never ends.'

The latter group is so absorbed in God that their spirits and their bodies are cut off from everything other than Him. They are even unaware of death when it arrives. Al-Lamaʿī concludes that whoever's spirit is taken while he's engaged in the Eternal...doesn't succumb to mortality in the usual way. 'So here's the remedy for death!'

.....  
**Chapter Nine** deals with the difference between light-filled and gloom-laden illumination, and the division of light-filled illumination into that of the people of perfection and someone

inferior to this, as well as the difference between a person 'drawn unto God (*majdhūb*)' and the fool, given that both of them have lost their reason.

Pp. 841-44. Al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh how the philosophers of unbelief such as Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato and Galen, obtained their knowledge about the translunar world, i.e. the motion of the celestial bodies, the position of their orbits and the doctrine regarding each sphere and the planet it contains. After all, this knowledge is purely supernatural and cannot be grasped with the senses or by means of proofs in speculation. What's been recounted traditionally about Idris (Enoch) isn't sufficient to explain the elaborate details the philosophers mention nor has it been transmitted in reliable reports.

Al-Dabbāgh replies that God has created people worthy of light and truth, and others worthy of darkness and falsehood. The people of darkness are given illumination regarding darkness and its knowledge. Darkness is unbelief (*kufr*) and everything that cuts one off from God. 'It consists of the world as well as the ephemeral affairs and contingent events that occur in the world.' Al-Dabbāgh adds: 'That's why the people of falsehood receive illumination with regard to vision of the world, its heavens and its earth but they only behold ephemeral matters connected with contingent [celestial] bodies and their forms, as they mention in connection with the *iudicia astrorum* (*aḥkām al-nujūm*). For instance, that such-and-such a celestial body has its place in the such-and-such sphere, and that if such-and-such a celestial body comes into conjunction with it, this and that will happen.'

Pp. 844-47. The people of truth receive a first and a second illumination. The first one consists of everything the people of darkness receive concerning the world, i.e. the seven earths and what they contain, and the seven heavens and what they contain. They see the actions of the bondsmen in their houses and palaces—not with their eyes but with their deeper vision (*baṣīra*)—and they can predict the future. That's why it's said: 'Unveiling (*kashf*) is the weakest degree of Friendship with God.' On the other hand, the second illumination consists of vision of God's secrets that the people of darkness are veiled from. Whoever receives this illumination beholds the Friends who are knowers of God the Sublime and speaks intimately with them, even though they may be at a great distance from him. '...he beholds the spirits of the believers above the graves and the noble recording angels and the other angels, as well as Barzakh and the



spirits of the dead that are in Barzakh. And he beholds the tomb of the Prophet...and the column of light that extends from it up to the dome of Barzakh.'

If he finally comes to see the Prophet in a waking state, he acquires protection from Satan's deceitful play. His encounter with the noble personage (*al-dhāt al-sharīfa*) is a cause of his beholding the pre-eternal Essence (*al-dhāt al-azaliyya*) because he finds the noble personage 'absent' in the True. So this second illumination is what separates the people of truth from the people of falsehood.

The people of darkness are given the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) over ephemeral matters. They can walk on the sea, fly in the air, and they receive sustenance from the Unseen. The satans have been made into their helpers. This is the sense of the story of the Jew who was in a boat with Ibrāhīm al-Khawwās. The story is recounted by Abu Nu'aym in the *Hilya*. The Jew walked on the the sea and challenged Ibrāhīm to do the same. God then gives Ibrāhīm the power to walk on the sea. They become friends and travel about together. Finally, because of spending time with Ibrāhīm, the Jew becomes a Muslim and even 'attains the reality of Sufism'. Al-Dabbāgh rejects the story as downright nonsense.

P. 847. As for the origin of the sciences of philosophy and its judgements about the translunar world, it's related that one of Abraham's disciples succeeded in attaining a first stage of illumination from his master. And he halted there, i.e. before what he beheld of the world. He was delighted by what he beheld in the translunar world and he determined the *judicia astrorum* by the positions of the celestial bodies. He then renounced the religion of Abraham. It was this knowledge of his that's been handed down to the 'cursed philosophers'.

Pp. 847-50. 'The benefit of apostleship and prophethood consists of a single characteristic which is showing the way to God...' Anyone sent as an apostle or a prophet who led people to something other than God would be like the man in the story about Abraham. As they're walking over a bridge on the Bāb al-Ḥadīd, one of the gates of Fez, al-Dabbāgh says that their walking across this bridge fulfills its purpose on earth. 'If this benefit were removed from it, it would be sheer loss for the people.' It's the same for prophets, apostles and angels, and all God's upright bondsmen. Their benefit consists in showing the

way to God. If this benefit were removed from them, they could rightly be described the way the bridge was just described.

The people of truth generally say very little about future events, as was the case with the Prophet himself. This is 'because the world and the events that occur in it are detested by God the Sublime, and they detest whatever God detests...' Moreover, they can only speak of these things if they descend from their degree 'like someone who descends from the Pleiades (*al-thurayyā*) to the ground (*al-tharā*)'. In their normal degree they only see with the light of the True. Time and its ordering are suspended. 'There's no past, no present and no future in that light.' Al-Lamaṭī points out that the most harm the bondsmen undergo with regard to the Friends of God is in the area of distinguishing between the illumination of the people of darkness and the illumination of the people of truth. Ordinary folk think any unveilings and miraculous powers constitute perfection and truth in whomever they appear.

As for associating with a perfect Friend of God, it may be that what the bondsman wishes from the Friend is the opposite of what the Friend wants. If the bondsman isn't willing to turn his back on the world and its tawdry glitter, but only wants the Friend to fulfill his needs and desires day after day, the Friend will come to hate and loathe him. At the same time, if the Friend fulfills some of his desires and presents him with some unveilings, it may be that the disciple thinks there's nothing further to strive for. But this is error and wickedness.

Pp. 850-51. Al-Dabbāgh offers a similitude to explain the above situation. The Friend is like a man who makes pottery. He loves nothing but pottery and talks about nothing else. It so happens that he also possesses storehouses containing food and other things the people need but he pays no attention to this. If two men who want something from his storehouses approach him, the one blessed with success will only talk to him about the potter's craft. The potter then comes to love him and will provide him with things from his storehouses. The one who isn't blessed with success straightway asks for something from his storehouses. This fellow is lucky if he escapes without the man hitting him over the head with a pot. Now the Friend of God is like this and only wants to talk about God.

Pp. 851-53. Al-Lamaṭī asks about why the matters revealed by someone with a first illumination are false. After all, they were 'directly seen and perceived by the senses', whereas the false has

no basis to it. Al-Dabbāgh replies by pointing to a wall and saying: 'Don't we behold this, and yet it perishes and disappears? And don't we behold its Lord Who's created it and Who grasps it in His omnipotence, Who lives forever and isn't extinguished and doesn't die?' And yet beholding the wall without beholding God the Sublime is a false vision. 'The falsehood it contains is relative. That is to say, what we've seen is as nothingness compared with what we haven't seen.'

God's purpose in bestowing the first illumination is different in the case of the people of light and the people of darkness. The people of darkness are hereby driven from God's door. God hates them and cuts them off from Himself by attaching their hearts to other than Himself. The miraculous powers they possess have been conferred on them by way of 'deceptive forbearance (*imlā'*)' and 'enticement to destruction (*istidrāj*)'. As for the people of light, God loves them and causes them to advance from degree to degree. He removes the veil from their heart, opens the door for them and, by providing them with miraculous powers, strengthens their deeper vision and confirms their divine knowledge.

'The small may well be stronger than the great in beholding these events. For the great is absent from the events in what's stronger than them, namely beholding the True—He is exalted!' This was the case of al-Khaḍīr and Moses. Knowledge of the immediate situation was absent from Moses because he was engaged in vision of what's stronger, i.e. God the Sublime. But here Moses' lack of knowledge 'indicates the utmost perfection'. Al-Dabbāgh offers a similitude in which a great king has two servants, one whom he keeps in his presence at all times and another one who has free disposal over all the king's subjects and looks after the affairs of the realm. There's no doubt that the first servant is closer to the king, since he's familiar with the king's person and all the king's intimate secrets—this despite the second servant being more familiar with the affairs of the realm and the king's subjects.

Pp. 853-54. Al-Lamaṭi then asks whether al-Khaḍīr is a prophet. Al-Dabbāgh replies that he isn't a prophet, but God has honored him with His knowledge and given him the power of free disposal over His subjects. God has given him the complete knowledge that He bestows on the Support (*al-ghawth*) in the Muḥammadan community. Such is his degree, despite his not having had a shaykh and not having travelled the path.

Pp. 854-56. Al-Dabbāgh goes on to explain that a sign that the bondsman has achieved beholding the Prophet in a waking state is that his thought is continually occupied with the noble Prophet. And this is so whether the bondsman is eating and drinking, indeed even when he's quarreling or sleeping. Al-Lamaṭī asks whether this is because of some stratagem or effort on the person's part. Al-Dabbāgh replies that if that were the case the person would become negligent as soon as a distraction arrived. In fact, the bondsman has no choice in the matter. His interior is with the Prophet, while his exterior is with the people. And everything he does, like eating, speaking, etc., is without intention.

Al-Lamaṭī notes that whenever he asked al-Dabbāgh about some detail of the Prophet's appearance such as his complexion, height and the length of his hair, the Shaykh would give him an answer 'like that of someone who sees directly and witnesses [the situation]'. If I asked him this kind of question while he was busy trimming and pruning trees, he'd appear to be shunning the question and turning his attention to something else. But as soon as I finished posing the question, he'd reply rapidly, without reflecting, which confirmed what he'd said earlier that what's important is the interior and that everything he did outwardly was without intention.

Pp. 856-58. The sign of the bondsman having attained the vision of the Lord—He is mighty and glorious—is that after beholding the Prophet, attachment to his Lord occurs in his thought such that his thought is absent in this the same way it had been absent in the Prophet. 'And the bondsman continues this way until he experiences illumination with regard to beholding the True—He is exalted! ...Now if his body is given to drink all the varieties of pleasure of the dwellers in Paradise upon his beholding the Prophet, what do you think he experiences upon beholding the True...Who's the creator of the Prophet and the creator of Paradise and every single thing?'

'Then after illumination people are divided into two categories... One category is absent from everything but Him while beholding the True... As for the other category, who are the more perfect, their spirits are absent in beholding the True, while their bodies remain in beholding the Prophet. The vision of their spirits doesn't prevail over the vision of their bodies, nor does the vision of their bodies prevail over the vision of their spirits.' The second category is more perfect because 'they aren't

cut off from the vision of the Prophet...which is the cause of ascent in the vision of the True. Whoever has increase in beholding him is given increase in beholding the True—He is exalted—and whoever receives less vision of the Prophet, receives less vision of God...'

P. 858. One of the jurists asked al-Dabbāgh whether it's possible for the Friend of God to abandon ritual prayer. He replied: 'How could this be possible since he's continually burning in two flames? His body burns in the flame of beholding the Prophet...and his spirit burns in the flame of beholding the True... And both of the visions command him to perform the prayers and other things from the secrets of the *sharī'a*.' And another time he replied that the Friend only obtains what he obtains from the good after his body has been given to drink the secrets of the Prophet's body. '...and how could a body be given to drink the secrets of the noble body and yet not perform what the noble body performs? This simply isn't so.'

Pp. 858-59. And al-Dabbāgh says: 'If God the Sublime wishes to have mercy on His bondsman and transfers him from the state of being veiled to the state of illumination, fear for his sake comes over the Friends of God.' They don't know whether he'll die or be deprived of his reason because of the intensity of the illumination. 'The meaning of being deprived of reason is that reason departs with the awesome things it sees and is completely cut off from the body and doesn't return to it.' Al-Lamaṭī asks: 'Why does someone who receives illumination experience coming forth from his [inner] center so that he dies or his reason disappears?' Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'When the bondsman is given illumination, he beholds things from the world of the angels, the Jinn and the satans that can't be supported, and he sees shocking images and hears frightful sounds that cause the liver to burst... How many a man is in his shop selling things and God confers illumination on him and he sees what can't be supported and immediately dies! The people think he died suddenly without any cause. But he died from illumination.'

Pp. 859-61. Al-Lamaṭī then asks what the difference is between someone who's lost his reason because of illumination and someone who's lost his reason due to another cause. Al-Dabbāgh replies that in reality the person with illumination is absent in beholding the True. God has separated his reason from his body for some divine purpose. In the case of an insane person, God cuts off his spirit from beholding the Lofty Essence for one or

two moments and allows it to see the actions of its body. As soon as the spirit sees these wicked actions, a state of constriction comes over it and the person's reason disappears. But if the constriction ceases, expansiveness and friendliness come over the spirit and it returns to beholding the Lofty Essence. A person's reason then returns to him. Someone who's received illumination is capable of distinguishing between the madman who's lost his reason because of illumination and is a Friend of God, and the ordinary madman. The Friend, though he's lost his reason and doesn't know what he's saying, still reveals secrets from among God's secrets. Likewise, his spirit is always expansive and filled with joy and happiness.

Al-Dabbāgh adds that those who've lost their reason 'other than by means of illumination are the equivalent of animals...' None the less, God will have mercy on them and admit them to Paradise because their human form will intercede for them. After all, they possess the same noble form as God's prophets and His apostles and intimate friends. Consequently, after death they won't become mere dust like the animals. As for those who've lost their reason by means of illumination, they're among the noble Friends of God, except that they don't possess the power of free disposal along with the Friends. Nor does a Support or Pivot emerge from them, until God the Sublime wishes the Anti-Christ (al-Dajjāl) to come forth. Then God will bestow the power of free disposal on this group, and the Support will be from among them. Affairs in the world will become corrupted and order will break down. It's then that the Anti-Christ will appear.

Pp. 861-62. Once by way of testing al-Dabbāgh, Sayyidī 'Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī asked him whether he knew of something in the world that's better than entering Paradise and something that's worse than entering Hell. Al-Dabbāgh replied that beholding the Prophet in a waking state—and the Friend of God sees him today just as the Companions saw him—is more excellent and precious than entering Paradise. As for what's worse than Hell, it's to be 'deprived' after having received illumination. 'Someone who's been stripped of his military command in the world is better off as to his situation than this deprived person—we seek refuge with God from such an eventuality! The man endowed with military command recalls in his thought all the delights he experienced... For the other deprived person it's different. His heart is obliterated and the sun of his deeper vision is eclipsed.'

Pp. 862-65. Al-Dabbāgh now tells the story of Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Bannā who was originally from Ṭarābulus. He travelled all over the Islamic world and visited every well-known Friend of God. But he didn't experience illumination. When al-Bannā questioned these holy men, even the most ascetic among them proved to be lacking in understanding the Prophet's true station and ignorant of their Lord. One day al-Bannā was at the seashore and he observed men carrying large loads of merchandise from ships that arrived there. Their loads were much heavier than what the fellaheen of Egypt and the Zarzāya of Fez are accustomed to carry. When al-Bannā thought to himself that they were amazingly strong, one of them who was a knower of God said to him: 'Don't be amazed by this but be amazed by God's omnipotence which will become manifest in me.' He then went off with his load but he soon came back. He stretched out on the ground, extending his arms and legs, and his spirit departed from him. This was to show that God alone is the Strong One. Afterwards a group of knowers of God told him to return to his country. Once he reached home, however, he was informed that what he wished for was in Fez. There he met al-Dabbāgh. After residing in Fez for six months, he finally became a knower of God, indeed one of the members of the Dīwān.

Pp. 865-66. Al-Lamaṭī is confused by this and asks how al-Bannā could have been given illumination while al-Dabbāgh was still alive, because a Friend of God doesn't receive illumination during the lifetime of his 'father'. Only when the 'secret of the body' transfers to the child is illumination possible. If illumination occurs before that, it isn't firmly established and it quickly disappears. Al-Dabbāgh explains that al-Bannā wasn't his child but other people's property. In fact, he belonged to a man in the region of Marrakesh who was a knower of God. When he died, his secret remained with al-Dabbāgh. 'But when this man [al-Bannā] arrived, I dressed him in a shirt I was wearing and I bestowed that secret upon him.' And al-Dabbāgh also transferred to al-Bannā the secrets of that man's body. None the less, he still didn't stand in relation to him [as father] to child.

Al-Lamaṭī says: 'The man inherited from was in the area of Marrakesh and his heir was from the people of Ṭarābulus.' Al-Lamaṭī wants to know whether that means the good in question has been cut off from the people of the Maghrib? Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'A body doesn't inherit another body unless it's similar to it in mind, nature and blood. Sayyidī So-and-so used to say: "If

[inheritance] were based on proximity, it would go to my son. If it were based on power, it would go to the sultan. And if it were based on service, it would go to So-and-so my servant. But it's based on agreement of mind with mind, nature with nature, and blood with blood." And he added: 'If you've heard the knower of God frequently declare: "So-and-so is my heir. He's the possessor of my secret. After me be attached to him", know that most of the time it isn't like this, because these are Lordly secrets and they only arrive in a way people don't expect. Indeed, the shaykhs attained them while they were thought to be unworthy of them by the people. This is the way things turn out.'

Pp. 866-67. Al-Dabbāgh then relates some stories to illustrate these points. For instance, eight persons serve a shaykh. Seven persevere, whereas one is weak and incapable. Wherever the shaykh sends him he doesn't achieve anything. Meanwhile, three of the others marry their daughters to the shaykh. And one of the daughters is exceptionally beautiful. The shaykh now busies himself with the man whose daughter possessed superior beauty. Everyone assumes he'll be the shaykh's heir. When the shaykh is on his deathbed, however, he summons the previously mentioned weak person and tells him: 'You're the possessor of the secret.' Indeed, God has more mercy and consideration for someone whom the people at large view with contempt.

Pp. 867-68. A Friend of God had two novices, one from the common people, the other a *sharīf*. The shaykh ordered the commoner to go to the *sharīf* and ask him to sell him the secret and illumination. The ordinary man obeys and asks the *sharīf* to sell him illumination for a hundred dinars. The *sharīf* refuses. The commoner offers him a further hundred dinars. The *sharīf* goes on refusing even after being offered in addition a servant woman and the common man's daughter in marriage. Finally, when the man offers him his house as well, the *sharīf* accepts. Both men were veiled and knew nothing about the secrets of illumination. But the common man acted out of sheer faith in the shaykh's words. That night after they'd made their transaction, the *sharīf* was very pleased with himself and the common man felt gloomy but didn't give in to any doubts about his shaykh. Dawn came and the *sharīf* experienced illumination. He was overcome with delight but then suddenly he was deprived of the illumination. The illumination went to the common man and he became one of the Friends of God. And the *sharīf* wasn't only deprived of illumination but his reason left him as well. He lived



on in this state for another sixty years. He simply went on repeating: 'Where are you? Take the house, take the servant woman, take the dinars, take your daughter, and I'll add my mother for you!'

Pp. 868-69. And al-Dabbāgh related: 'I know a man who's been deprived of his reason. The only thing he does is toss a stone into the air and position his head so the stone stamps a mark on it.' He used to repair worn-out shoes. One day a Friend of God gave him some money and told him to buy a new hat for the Friend. His carnal soul, however, seduced him into keeping the new hat for himself. The next day the Friend realized the man had betrayed him. Catching him by surprise, he snatched the hat from his head and said to him: 'Look at what you've lost from God—He is mighty and glorious!' For one short moment the man experienced illumination but was then deprived of it. He felt that this calamity had befallen him because of his head. He lost his reason and began to toss a stone in the air and let it come down on his head. Al-Lamaṭī adds that the man is still alive and al-Dabbāgh has pointed him out to him.

Pp. 869-70. By way of commenting on the nature of the secret that the Sufis (*al-qawm*) refer to, al-Dabbāgh formulated a similitude. The secret is like gold that the king possesses and that he only gives to people with a special quality among his subjects. He then adds that illumination is something additional which strengthens the secret. Illumination can occur with respect to each of the five senses. Illumination of the sense of hearing, for instance, means someone can hear a bird that flutters its wing in the sky's atmosphere and an ant when it moves its leg a year's distance away. If the secret occurs without illumination, the body's nature is stamped with the truth. It knows only the truth and speaks only the truth, and it's characterized by the virtuous attributes of forgiveness, clemency and pardoning, modesty and nobility, etc. But if illumination descends upon the body before 'the light of power', defect and weakness will occur in the body and lead to death or loss of reason. If God were to provide a weak blade of grass with this power, it would be able to carry the weight of a mountain. 'A person whom God has given success asks God the Sublime to make the light of power descend on him before the light of illumination descends on him.'

Pp. 870-71. Al-Dabbāgh mentions that at the beginning of his affair he entered before his shaykh Sayyidī Maṣṣūr [b. Aḥmad] who was a weaver, and he found him weeping. Sayyidī Maṣṣūr

said he felt he wasn't good for anything, not even for weaving. He used to think he produced the cloth he wove but now he saw that it was God Who produced it. Al-Dabbāgh says he didn't know what to say to him then but today he'd tell him to seek God in something more (*al-ziyāda*). 'At present you're engaged in beholding contingent things.' For God's actions are among His contingent created things.

Pp. 871-72. Then al-Dabbāgh praised the greatness of Sayyidī °Umar al-Hawwārī. He singled out four special qualities in him. 1) He never said anything bad about anyone, neither secretly nor in public. 2) His whole life was spent in retirement in the shrine of Sayyidī °Alī b. Ḥirzihim, reciting litanies. 3) He had no interest in superficial things or any form of recognition. And 4) he had thoroughly renounced the world. He was content to go hungry if no donations were made to the shrine and to eat a plain piece of bread soaked in water. And al-Dabbāgh goes on to praise a particular characteristic of the Friend of God, namely that even when he can foresee an imminent calamity, he acts as if nothing at all is about to happen. 'You see that he observes what will take place in the future, yet he eats and drinks, laughs and sleeps with his wife, like an ignorant person who has no deeper vision whatsoever...' For in the end no one can fully comprehend the action of God the Sublime. 'In this characteristic is found an indescribable repose.'

Pp. 872-73. Al-Lamaṭī asks about the Friend of God who possesses three hundred and sixty-six bodies. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'He's the perfect heir, that is to say the Support and no one else.' But al-Lamaṭī says that the one he inherits from, i.e. the Prophet, possesses one hundred and twenty-four thousand bodies. 'Why is it that the Support doesn't inherit all of them?' Al-Dabbāgh replies that no one can sustain what the Prophet sustains. So the meaning of 'inheritance' in the case of the Support is that there's no body that's drunk from the body of the Prophet more than his body.

Al-Dabbāgh points out that people who've experienced the great illumination (*al-faṭḥ al-kabīr*) have had their past sins forgiven and don't commit any sins after illumination. They're continually engaged in beholding the True which hinders them from sin. Then al-Lamaṭī asks him what the prayers of the knowers of God are like. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'If a Friend says: "Allāhu akbar!" and performs prayer with this external body, the spirit's body performs prayer with him inside his body. The spirit

bows in his bowing and prostrates itself in his prostration.' Moreover, '...the ritual prayers of the spirit are accepted'. Al-Lamaṭī asks whether their ritual prayers are always accepted because they're invisible and therefore devoid of hypocrisy. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'No, but rather because they're the truth from the truth to the truth. The visible prayers have only been prescribed because of the inability of most people to perform the prayers of the spirit.'

Pp. 874-75. Al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh about someone who lived in the tenth century of the *hijra*. Al-Dabbāgh replies that he received illumination but his state halted where it was and he became a magician. This is because he beheld the sins of his fellow bondsmen and how they'd fallen into them, as well as the gloom-laden mist that the people of darkness draw assistance from. If God wishes someone evil, He causes him to become fixed on this. 'Magic is made subservient to him and he becomes one of the magicians.' Indeed, illumination is a dangerous matter. If someone's body isn't ready for it, he may turn into a Christian or turn into a Jew, depending on the kind of things he sees. 'And how many a man only receives illumination when his spirit is on the point of departing! And how many a man dies without having received illumination and God resurrects him in a state more perfect and greater than the state of someone with illumination!'

Pp. 875-76. And al-Dabbāgh used to say that receiving illumination is like having a black snakeskin removed from oneself. The snakeskin is darkness that encompasses the entire body. Once the snakeskin disappears, the light of illumination is poured over the body. One particular group of angels removes the snakeskin, another group brings the secret. At the time of the snakeskin's disappearance, people are greatly alarmed because they don't know how this affair will turn out for the person who's received illumination. He runs the risk of dying or of losing his reason.

And he used to say: 'The light of illumination is in the body of the shaykh. If at the end of his life his heir has the capacity for it, he receives it after the shaykh has departed from this world. If he doesn't have the capacity for it, it remains as a trust with our lord Gabriel...until the body of the novice can sustain it and his snakeskin disappears and he receives the secret.' Three days before someone is going to receive illumination, Gabriel becomes a friend to him and keeps company with him by way of love for

the Prophet and then provides him with guidance along the path. Moreover, don't be confused by the fact that some jurists maintain that it's impossible for people to see angels. Another group of jurists refutes them and states that there's no rivalry with the Prophet implied in this. Indeed, the shaykh al-Sha'rānī in his book the *Minan* points out that al-Bukhārī and others have published authentic reports which make it clear that angels have even appeared to people in communities other than the Muslim community. For examples of this, see the reports that deal with the Israelites in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

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**Chapter Ten** presents a description of Barzakh and how the spirits come to reside there.

In section [1] al-Dabbāgh describes the shape of Barzakh. He says that it's narrow at its lowest point and becomes wider as it rises upward. On its top is a huge dome. As for Barzakh's immense size, it has its foundation in the lowest heaven and then extends upward through all seven heavens and beyond. 'And this is the Well-appointed House (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr*).'

In section [2] al-Lamaṭī remarks that the Well-appointed House is normally conceived of as being in the seventh heaven. But in al-Dabbāgh's description it would seem that it's in every heaven. Al-Dabbāgh explains that people restrict themselves to only speaking of what's above the seventh heaven 'because that's where the referred to dome is located. The dome is the most noble thing in Barzakh.' It contains the spirit of the Prophet as well as his wives, daughters and progeny who lived in his time and whoever of his progeny following after him act in the truth up until the Day of the Resurrection. Also present there are the spirits of the four caliphs and the martyrs, and the spirits of the Prophet's heirs from among the Friends of God.

Al-Lamaṭī adds that the breadth of Barzakh is so vast that it takes the sun in the fourth heaven an entire year to revolve around it. And the whole of Barzakh consists of holes which contain the spirits. Then al-Dabbāgh goes on to say that the dome is divided into seven parts which resemble the seven gardens of Paradise. Nor does the Prophet's spirit stay in the dome permanently, since nothing but the Prophet's pure body is capable of sustaining his noble spirit. As for the spirits in Barzakh, from the fourth heaven upward they possess penetrating lights, whereas the people from the third heaven downward are mostly veiled and their spirits possess no light. When a spirit

leaves Barzakh and enters a body in the world, its hole remains empty. Upon returning after death, however, it doesn't occupy the same hole but rather some higher or lower place depending on whether it was a believer or an infidel.

In section [3] al-Dabbāgh explains that the position of the spirits in Barzakh was determined on the day of: 'Am I not your Lord?' (7/172). Up until then the final outcomes and God's intention regarding the spirits were unknown. Then God ordered Isrāfil to blow his trumpet. The spirits experienced fear and terror such as will occur in the thunderclap of death and on the Resurrection. God then put His awesome question to the spirits. The people of felicity responded with joy. And here the diversity in their ranks was revealed as regards their vision. The shaykh was distinguished from the novice and the difference between the prophets and their communities appeared. As for the people of wretchedness, they replied begrudgingly. They fled the way bees flee from smoke. They experienced baseness and their lights were eclipsed. Thus, on this occasion every spirit had its place designated for it in Barzakh, whereas up until then they were free to occupy any place they wished.

Whoever now looks at Barzakh can tell by the brightness or the darkness of the spirits on hand which ones have returned from their physical bodies and which ones haven't yet gone forth into the world. When the last of the spirits have descended into the world, the Resurrection will take place.

In [4] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh for confirmation that those endowed with unveiling, including of course the Prophet, know when the final hour will arrive—and this despite the *ḥadīth* in which the Prophet says that only God knows the five signs that precede the end of the world. Al-Dabbāgh explains that the Prophet only spoke this way because of something that appeared to him at that moment. Otherwise, even the seven Pivots of his noble community, not to mention the Support, have this knowledge.

Then al-Dabbāgh explains that before the creation of Adam and the return of the spirits from their bodily shapes, there was little light in Barzakh. But once the spirits of Adam and the prophets among his progeny, as well as the spirits of the Friends of God, had ascended to Barzakh, its light gradually began to multiply. Al-Lamaṭī then asks where the spirits of the infidels are located in Barzakh. Al-Dabbāgh replies that they reside in Barzakh's lowest level. Their abode is as black as charcoal. This

blackness is caused by the state of the infidels. In the hereafter it's the qualifications of interior things that take on appearance, because these are what's true and 'the hereafter is an abode characterized by truth'.

In [5] al-Dabbāgh explains that in the hereafter people experience different amounts of sweat. In the case of some, it rises to the level of their knees, with others it reaches their waist, and with another group it reaches their mouth. And this occurs where the ground is perfectly level. The amount of their sweat depends on the relationship of their interior to the world because 'the hereafter is an abode characterized by truth'.

Then al-Dabbāgh describes date-palm branches in Barzakh that stretch forth like a long drawn-out column and extend to the region of Hell. Hell's suffering and evil-smelling odor cause people in that part of Barzakh to resemble someone who's really in Hell. Similarly, in the part of Barzakh with the spirits of the blissful there are date-palm branches that extend to Paradise. Its blessings and sweet-smelling odor cause these people to resemble someone who's really in Paradise. 'Those who reside in these date-palm branches are the martyrs and whomever God the Sublime has shown mercy.'

In section [6] al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh to explain some apparent contradictions. For instance, the Qur'ān says that the gates of heaven are closed for the infidels and yet the bottom of Barzakh is located in the lowest heaven. Likewise, religious scholars have said that the part of Barzakh for the believers extends from their graves to the summit of the Loftiest Heights (*'illiyyūn*) and the part for the infidels descends from their graves down to Sijjīn, the lowest reaches of the world. Al-Dabbāgh one time replied that since the spirit of the infidel is in the lowest heaven, it's veiled. Figuratively speaking, its eye, its ear and its heart have been sewn shut. So it's as if the gates of heaven haven't been opened for it. Another time he said that there are two categories of infidel spirits in Barzakh. One category is entirely veiled due to its darkness and wicked state. The other category isn't veiled but all it sees is the punishment that's been prepared for it. Both these categories of spirit are within the wrath of God, and this situation resembles someone for whom the gates of heaven have been closed. And another time still, al-Dabbāgh said: 'When we say that Barzakh has its beginning in the lowest heaven...we don't mean it's only in the region above our heads but it's also beneath our feet because the sky encompasses the

earth... Barzakh is an immense creation. The width of its foundation, which is its most narrow part, is seven times the size of the earth.'

Another time al-Dabbāgh remarked that when some infidels die, their spirit is at first hindered from ascending to Barzakh. The satans and devils play with it the way children play with a ball. One satan throws it to another satan, or they hurl it against a rock. Only when the infidel's body decomposes in the grave and becomes dust, does his spirit ascend to its abode in the lowest part of Barzakh. Al-Dabbāgh also reports how he saw people in the third earth being tormented by fire in narrow rooms. A man he'd known in life suddenly appeared in their midst. Al-Dabbāgh called out to him by his name and said: 'Woe unto you! What caused you to descend to this abode?' The man was about to reply but just then his abyss swallowed him up. Moreover, the man the Shaykh saw had been one of the faithful in the House of the world.

In section [7] al-Dabbāgh explains that there are threads of light between Barzakh and Paradise which only occur after certain spirits have ascended from their physical shapes. This light is the light of faith. The body of that Friend of God then receives support from Paradise. Similarly, from the part of Barzakh with the spirits of infidels there are threads and darkness that extend to Hell. That darkness is unbelief. You see it come forth from Barzakh on its way to Hell, and the only support the spirits of the infidels receive is from the hot wind (*samūm*) of Hell. Likewise, someone with deeper vision (*baṣīra*) can see a thread of the light of faith that extends to Barzakh from the body of the believers in the world. It comes forth from the believer's head and, depending on a person's allotment in pre-eternity, it may have the thickness of a thread or of a reed or even have the thickness of a palm-tree. The latter belongs to the great among the Friends of God.

Similar threads are observed between the bodies of the infidels and their abode in Barzakh, except that these threads have a blue color tending toward black. This is a sign of wretchedness in whomever it's observed. Depending on a person's degree of unbelief, the thread in question will also vary in thickness as was the case with the thread of the believers. Al-Dabbāgh adds: 'How many times I've looked at Jews who live in the Jewish quarter (*mallāḥ*) and coming forth from their heads I've seen threads that join together on the horizon and ascend like black mist. And

among them are little white threads, pure and radiant, and due to this I know that the possessors of these threads will transfer to the religion of the Prophet, that is to say our Prophet Muḥammad.'

Even among small children who aren't yet obligated to observe the religious duties, one has a radiant thread and another has a thread that's dark blue—indicating to anyone who's an adept at this kind of unveiling what God has ordained for them in the hereafter. One time al-Dabbāgh remarked to al-Lamaṭī as they walked past a group of children who were playing: 'Whoever looks at the children of the present era knows the goodness of this era compared with the one that's coming in the future. Indeed, most of the lights of the children of this era are of extreme goodness and beauty.'

And another time al-Dabbāgh came upon a boy and said to al-Lamaṭī: 'Behold the light of Friendship with God! Look at its sweetness in his face! Look at the Friendship with God in his body! Surely, it isn't hidden from anyone.' And he charged al-Lamaṭī to look after the boy. Al-Lamaṭī tells us that the boy grew up, made the pilgrimage to Mecca and experienced great visions. '...his state is one of goodness, his affair one of uprightness and his face gives off a beautiful radiance.' Indeed, someone endowed with this unveiling can tell what a person will be like from the moment the person's body drops from the womb to the ground—the same way one can recognize a particular kind of tree the moment it sprouts from the earth.

Next al-Lamaṭī asks why hypocrites are in the lowest depths of Hell indicating that they're the worst of the infidels. After all, they performed the prayers, fasting, holy war and the pilgrimage to Mecca, and they held back from causing harm to the people of Islam. Al-Dabbāgh replies that actions play no role in the matter. Unbelief and its wickedness come forth from what occurred in pre-eternity. He adds that he's often seen a gloom-laden, dark blue column descend from Barzakh which he at first thought must be heading for one of the cities of the infidels, indeed for one of their tyrannical rulers. But when he followed it, he saw it descend on a weak little old man sitting in his shop to earn a living.

And another time al-Dabbāgh said: 'Although the blue thread is an indication of wretchedness (damnation), it can change with permission from God, if the possessor of this thread mingles with the people of felicity and associates and is intimate with them.'



...little by little his thread will go on purifying itself until he becomes like the people of felicity. Praise be to God!

In section [8] al-Lamaṭī gives another example of how people who have a blue thread can change, namely if the latter associate with the people of felicity, i.e. those destined for Paradise. Through the sending forth of prophets people are brought together and they give each other sincere advice and mutual assistance. Through the coming together of people change occurs. This is one of the benefits of sending forth prophets. This is the secret behind the Prophet's command to adhere to the Community (*jamā'ah*). Whoever abandons the Community dies a death as in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance.

Al-Lamaṭī relates how one time he was walking hand in hand with al-Dabbāgh in one of the markets. They came upon a certain person who was generally held in esteem for his godliness, and he made every effort to encourage this. The man addressed them with words of advice but they refrained from answering him. Afterwards al-Dabbāgh swore he saw a blue thread arising from him. Al-Lamaṭī adds that he doesn't know whether the man's thread eventually changed or not.

In section [9] al-Dabbāgh talks about the column of light that extends from the Friend of God's grave upward to his spirit in Barzakh. 'When the body dies, the spirit is transferred to Barzakh and the spirit's secret is cut off from the body. If the body is transformed and perishes, its secret may remain connected to the grave in the case of some Friends of God. A column of the light of his faith continues to exist in the grave, extending up to the spirit which is in Barzakh, the way it existed in the body previously.' And it's the same with the column of light coming forth from the Prophet's grave. 'The angels come in groups and circle round the noble outstretched light. They court its favor and implore its help like bees around the chief bee.'

And one time al-Dabbāgh said: 'When God wished to confer illumination on me and join me with His mercy, I looked at the noble grave [of the Prophet]—and I was in Fez—and then I looked at the noble light, and it began to approach me and when it was close to me, a man came forth from it and behold, it was the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!' After that Sayyidī 'Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī said God had joined al-Dabbāgh with His mercy, i.e. with the lord of existence, and he was no longer afraid that the satans would make sport of him.

Finally, in section [10] al-Dabbāgh says that the higher parts of Barzakh are dressed in the lights of the spirits of the believers. Indeed, even the light of the sun comes from their lights. But the bottom of Barzakh is black and dark and no illumination occurs to the celestial bodies opposite it. God didn't want the spirits of the infidels to derive benefit from the lights of the believers' spirits. Thus the moon and the stars draw their light from the sun which is outside Barzakh. Al-Lamaṭī asks about the claim of the astrologers that the fixed stars are in the sphere of the fixed stars, i.e. the eighth sphere. Al-Dabbāgh retorts: 'Where do they get this idea from?' Al-Lamaṭī replies that they say the course of the fixed stars is different from the course of the seven planets. But al-Dabbāgh declares: 'It isn't the way they think. All the stars are located in the lower heaven.'

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**Chapter Eleven** deals with what al-Dabbāgh had to say about Paradise, its characteristics and its different degrees, and other related matters.

Pp. 894-95. Al-Dabbāgh begins by saying that the paradise al-Firdaws contains all the delights one has ever heard of in the world as well as others one hasn't heard of. This includes gushing rivers. But these rivers consist of four drinks: water, honey, milk and wine. And in any given river the four drinks remain separate like the different colors of the rainbow. Whichever of these drinks the believer happens to desire flows forth for him. And the river then flows forth with a different drink for someone else, in accordance with his particular desire. If you look at the river from beginning to end, you see that it contains different drinks in different places without any partitions between them. Nor do the rivers flow in a hollowed out riverbed.

P. 895. Then al-Dabbāgh says that people are wrong in thinking that al-Firdaws is the highest and most excellent paradise. There's another paradise still more excellent and it contains none of the delights found in all the other ones. Its inhabitants are people endowed with vision of God from among His prophets and His Friends. For these people direct vision of God is more precious and more excellent than every other delight the mind can imagine. Most of those who'll dwell in al-Firdaws are from the community of our Prophet Muḥammad. Only some twenty persons from his community, people of wickedness and grave sins, have been excluded. Now since the Prophet loves his community and likes to visit them, God has joined the center of

al-Firdaws with the center of Lofty Paradise (*al-janna al-‘āliya*) which is where the divine vision just mentioned occurs. Thus the Prophet has contact with everyone in his community, the people of divine vision as well as the others.

Pp. 895-97. Al-Lamaṭī tells us that on the basis of certain *ḥadīths* he'd thought that this Lofty Paradise was the same as the region known as the Loftiest Heights. But when asked about the matter, al-Dabbāgh explains that the Loftiest Heights and the Lofty Paradise are two different places, both located above the paradise al-Firdaws. The correct name for the highest paradise where there are no delights besides beholding God is the House of Increase. Moreover, the pleasure one experiences there is pleasure of the spirit, whereas the pleasure people experience in the other levels of Paradise is pleasure of their eternal bodies. Whoever experiences the one kind of pleasure can't experience the other. Only the Prophet is capable of joining the two together. As for the Loftiest Heights, its delights are less numerous in kind than those in al-Firdaws but they're of finer quality because of its being located closer to the House of Increase whose delights are spiritual and not based on the senses. This is where a group of prophets dwell, including Abraham and Ishmael.

Pp. 897-99. Al-Lamaṭī is confused by the multiplicity of names and refers to further *ḥadīths* that indicate that al-Firdaws should be considered the highest of the paradises. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'Whoever wishes to call these three paradises one paradise may do so.' For, in fact, the Prophet's dome occupies the House of Increase, the paradise of the Loftiest Heights and the paradise al-Firdaws. Therefore whoever is in one of these three paradises is with the Prophet. Al-Lamaṭī notes with satisfaction that this is the best way to harmonize the statements found in the relevant *ḥadīths*. Al-Lamaṭī then asks whether the remaining paradises also contain delights. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'They contain delights in accordance with the works of their inhabitants.' But the paradise al-Firdaws is for this religious community and whoever has professed God's oneness through divine guidance rather than through the sending of a prophet. Two examples are given of persons who lived during the *fatra*—the time period between Jesus and the Prophet Muḥammad—and who perceived God's oneness through their deeper vision (*baṣīra*). The Prophet has said about them: 'On the Day of Resurrection each will be resurrected as a community on his own.'

Pp. 899-901. Al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh how many paradises there are all together. He replies: 'Eight.' He then names them: 'The House of Peace (*dār al-salām*), the Paradise of Delight (*jannat al-naʿīm*), the Paradise of Refuge (*jannat al-maʿwā*), the House of Eternity (*dār al-khulūd*), the Paradise of Eden (*jannat ʿadn*), the Paradise of al-Firdaws (*jannat al-firdaws*), the Paradise of the Loftiest Heights (*jannat al-ʿilliyyīn*), and the House of Increase (*dār al-mazīd*).' Al-Lamaṭī remarks that the religious scholars are less precise than the Shaykh regarding this matter, since they give varying numbers. The number eight is consistent with the fact that there are eight gates to Paradise according to numerous *ḥadīths*. And al-Dabbāgh says: 'The arrangement of the paradises isn't the way people think.' The paradises aren't simply located on top of one another in an ascending order. 'Instead, the number [eight] is established in the six directions. If someone comes from below, he'll find this number of paradises. And if someone comes from the right, he'll find this number of paradises. And so it is for all the directions. The affair of the hereafter doesn't resemble the affair of the world.'

Moreover, al-Dabbāgh says that Paradise is like nothing on the face of the earth, though it does resemble Barzakh. He then undertakes a brief digression and describes Barzakh as containing holes like the holes of a sea sponge. These holes aren't only on the exterior but also occur in the vast depths of Barzakh's interior. The holes in question are like the holes of the honeycomb of bees. To make the comparison even closer, he says you must imagine a great number of honeycombs all joined together with an outer cover that hides the honey contained inside. Returning to his description of Paradise, al-Dabbāgh attempts to convey a sense of its immensity, though he knows this isn't something the human understating can grasp. Hypothetically, if Paradise were divided into seven parts, a mere hole in the first part would be the size of the world and ten further equivalents of the world. The second part would be many more times bigger than that. And the third part would be multiplied to an extent beyond any reckoning. And so he continues in vain to seek a suitable comparison to express the incalculable size of Paradise.

Al-Dabbāgh goes on to add by way of warning that one mustn't think the inhabitants of the first of the seven divisions are lower than those of the second division. Some of the people of the first part are above the people in the second part. And he

concludes by describing the vast extent of space that even the believer with the lowest rank in Paradise enjoys: 'In Paradise God bestows on the believer the amount of what extends above his head in the world up to the Celestial Throne, what extends below him down to the Throne, what extends on his right as far as the Throne, what extends to his left as far as the Throne, what extends behind him to the Throne, and what extends in front of him to the Throne.' The Celestial Throne is where the sublunar world comes to an end.

Pp. 901-02. And al-Dabbāgh describes how in Paradise the same couch appears in different varieties. One has the quality of silver, one the quality of gold, another is of emerald, another of ruby, etc. 'Should the person on the couch desire to make an excursion and go from place to place, the couch transports him if he wishes or, if he wishes, he transports himself. He walks in whichever of the six directions he wishes. This is in contrast to the world where he only walks in the forward direction. In Paradise he walks upward and downward, to the right and to the left, backward and forward... And all the delights and the kinds of fruits and edibles in Paradise don't resemble anything in the world.' God has condescended to call them by the names people are familiar with in the world so that they at least acquire some general idea, though the fruits themselves are different. If a so-called grape, for instance, came forth from the lowest paradise, i.e. the one adjacent to the seven heavens and the seven earths, its light would eclipse the light of the sun, the moon and the stars, and nothing would remain but its bright radiance.

Pp. 902-04. Al-Dabbāgh explains that there are eight gates to Paradise. They will disappear after all the blissful have entered Paradise, for there will be no exiting at a later time. But al-Dabbāgh remains silent and will say no more on this point. Al-Lamaṭī understands there's another secret connected with this subject which al-Dabbāgh is unwilling to relate. However, he does mention that in front of each of the gates of Paradise is one of the eight angels who carry the Celestial Throne. He explains that the secret behind this is that God used the light of the Prophet to create these eight angels and the eight paradises. Each angel and each paradise is related to one another in origin and in terms of their secret. Moreover, each angel is given to drink the light of his particular paradise.

Al-Lamaṭī asks whether 'the gate of repentance' referred to in *ḥadīths* is one of these eight gates to Paradise. Al-Dabbāgh replies

that the light of faith is a paradise among the paradises and is the cause of every benefit in the paradises. If repentance is a gate for faith, in this sense it's one of the gates of Paradise. Likewise, the interior of the paradises proceeds from a lower to a higher state and the same is true of the interior of repentance, which proceeds from the darkness of sins to repentance and obedience. From this point of view, as well, repentance is one of the gates of Paradise. As for the gate of repentance being closed when the sun shall rise from the place where it set (as mentioned in *ḥadīths*), this is a figurative way of indicating the removal of the light of truth from the people of the earth. 'That removal is the command of God referred to in the *ḥadīth*: "A group from my community will not cease to be aware of the truth until the command of God arrives."' The group referred to here are the members of the *Dīwān* who carry a share of the light in question. Through them the light remains on the face of the earth. When not one of them remains, the light will be taken away because there will be no one to carry it.

Pp. 904-05. Al-Lamaṭī asks why Paradise increases through invoking blessings on the Prophet but not by means of the glorification of God and other formulas for recollecting God. Al-Dabbāgh replies: 'Because the origin of Paradise is the light of the Prophet...and Paradise longs for his light the way a child longs for its father.' The angels that are in the outskirts of Paradise and at its gates are occupied with recollecting (*dhikr*) the Prophet and invoking blessings on him. Paradise longs for this. The angels are on all sides. Paradise therefore moves toward them and expands in all directions. If it weren't for God's hindrance, Paradise would have gone forth into the world during the lifetime of the Prophet, accompanying him everywhere and spending the night wherever he spent the night. When the Prophet and his community enter Paradise, Paradise will rejoice in them and expand, whereas when the other prophets and their communities arrive, Paradise will shrink in upon itself and become constricted.

Pp. 905-09. Al-Dabbāgh then enters upon a discussion of the belief that whenever someone invokes blessings on the Prophet, it's always accepted by God. He says that there's no doubt that invoking blessings on the Prophet is the most excellent of works and the recollection (*dhikr*) of the angels at the extremities of Paradise consists of this. Indeed, the angels only cease performing this activity when God manifests Himself to the people in Paradise. Once the said angels behold God, they begin

to glorify Him. Paradise then comes to a standstill and the halting-stations in Paradise become fixed for its inhabitants. However, the acceptance of invoking blessings on the Prophet is only assured when it comes forth from a pure body and a pure heart. This is also the meaning of the *ḥadīth*: 'Whoever says: "There is no god but God" will enter Paradise.' That is to say, such is the case provided these words are spoken in sincerity and come forth from a body devoid of hypocrisy and conceit.

Al-Lamaṭī adds that the same question was put to the Friend of God Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī. The latter replied that though there are scholars who believe that invoking blessings on the Prophet is always accepted by God, this is actually dubious because a good final outcome would then be assured for whoever did so. But everyone agrees that a person's final outcome can't be known. None the less, al-Sanūsī offers two rational probabilities that encourage one to invoke blessings on the Prophet. He refers to the fact that Abū Lahab and Abū Ṭālib, despite their lack of faith in the Prophet, will enjoy some relief from punishment in the hereafter because of the occasions when they showed their love for him. But here al-Lamaṭī points out that one can't draw analogies based on persons who were devoid of faith. And more generally, one must specify text from the revealed law if one is to establish certainty in a question like this. There's no place in matters of law for rational operations. And when al-Suyūṭī discusses a so-called *ḥadīth* that asserts that God always accepts invoking blessings on the Prophet, he says: 'I haven't come upon a chain of transmission for this.' Similarly, Ibn Ḥajar, in commenting on a variant of the same *ḥadīth*, says: 'This is weak (*da'īf*).' And al-Lamaṭī considers the views of other scholars regarding this question. In the end, he concludes that there's no proof of certainty of God's acceptance of invoking blessings on the Prophet. But he adds that one may still have high hopes of acceptance and this more than anything else is the commonly held opinion.

Pp. 909-10. Al-Dabbāgh then mentions that the clothing worn in Paradise never wears out. And at any one moment a person may wear seventy thousand items of clothing, since they're lights and they don't weigh anything. And he adds that every time one experiences a delight in Paradise, it's accompanied by amazement which produces a further delight. Every glance multiplies a given delight because the body's vision in Paradise doesn't halt at any limit. And al-Dabbāgh once said: 'There are those in Paradise

who may experience sadness and affliction.’ A certain religious scholar who was present denied this. Al-Dabbāgh later explained to al-Lamaṭī that when the inhabitants of Paradise first enter Paradise, their praise of God is commensurate with the knowledge of God they had in the House of the world. They then acquire further knowledge of God that exceeds any reckoning. This causes them to experience remorse in the extreme for their inadequacy with regard to their Lord’s rightful claim and how they’d served Him in the world.

Pp. 910-11. Similarly, the fornicators who enter Paradise come to realize the extent of their baseness and their ignorance of the Lord. Faced with His majesty and overwhelming domination, they feel shame and remorse to the point of losing consciousness. When they later regain their senses, they obtain an amount of power and perfection of divine knowledge that’s beyond description. Al-Lamaṭī confirms al-Dabbāgh’s explanations concerning remorse in Paradise by citing several *ḥadīths* such as, for example, the *ḥadīth* published by al-Suyūṭī: ‘The only affliction the inhabitants of Paradise experience is because of the moment they spent without recollecting God.’ And he adds two sound *ḥadīths* about Paradise that indicate that whoever wears silk in his lifetime won’t wear it in Paradise like everyone else, and whoever drinks wine and doesn’t repent won’t be allowed to drink wine in Paradise along with everyone else.

Pp. 911-12. Al-Dabbāgh then says that whereas the believers visualize the delights of Paradise in their mind and rejoice in them, the Friend of God is cut off from everything other than God the Sublime. No thought ever was or ever will be in his mind other than the thought of God. This, in fact, is why they’re called Friends of God. Al-Lamaṭī brings Chapter Eleven to a close with a similitude that al-Dabbāgh formulated to illustrate the bondsman’s exclusive preoccupation with God. A worm is placed in a pot of honey. It’s attained its desire and sets about eating from the honey night and day. If the honey pot along with the worm is then placed inside a bigger pot that contains tar, the worm doesn’t pay any attention to the tar. All that’s in the worm’s heart is honey. Its body and its complete being feel desire for honey and are cut off from everything that’s not honey.

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**Chapter Twelve** deals with what al-Lamaṭī heard from the Shaykh about Hell.



In section [1] al-Dabbāgh says that the inhabitants of Hell are deluded into thinking they can relieve their torment by eating the fruits and leaves of trees they see far off in the distance. But anything from Hell and Paradise that enters the bondsman's mouth can't be eliminated the way it's eliminated in the House of the world. Thus because of the fire this creates inside them, they retrace their steps with great speed and their previous torment is actually intensified.

In section [2] al-Dabbāgh explains that fire in Hell isn't like fire in the world that appears in the form of bright flames. Eventually the body would get used to that kind of fire and not feel pain from it. Instead, in Hell the distinctive characteristic of fire is sheer darkness. 'Were we to fill the world with fire and then suppose it was compressed and gathered together under great pressure as if it was inside something like a box, it would become absolute blackness and sheer darkness.' Such is the nature of the fire in Hell.

In [3] al-Dabbāgh points out that there are rivers in Hell and speaks of a woman, driven on by intense thirst, who carries her child on her back and heads for a distant river. She and her child foolishly drink from the river's water. But, as explained above, anything that enters the body only increases a person's torment. The mention of a child causes al-Lamaṭī to wonder whether procreation takes place in Hell or whether the child referred to came from the world.

In section [4] al-Lamaṭī notes that, on the question of the children of infidels and why they may deserve to be punished, a *ḥadīth* states: 'God knows best what they've done.' Thus any child that God knows would have grown up to believe in the Prophet Muḥammad, that child is one of the people of Paradise. And any child He knows would have grown up without believing in the Prophet, that child is one of the people of Hell-fire. This is why al-Khaḍīr killed one of his servants despite the servant being quite young. The youth in question was imbued with unbelief. When al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh for his view on the subject, the Shaykh replies: 'The truth about the matter is what this *ḥadīth* indicates.' And al-Dabbāgh adds that many a boy dies at a young age but will be resurrected among those who've learned the Book of God by heart or among the religious scholars who are knowers of God. For God knows that had they lived, they'd have become members of those distinguished groups.

In this connection, al-Lamaṭī tells the story of an adolescent who'd learned to recite the Qur'ān according to the tradition of Qālūn or Ibn Kathīr. He then went to visit the shrine of Sayyidī Abū Ya'azzā and with great sincerity requested to be able to learn to recite the Qur'ān according to all seven canonical forms of recitation. Thereupon Sayyidī Abū Ya'azzā appeared to him and gave him a diploma (*ijāza*) attesting that he was one of the 'Seveners', i.e. a person qualified to recite the Qur'ān in the seven established forms of recitation. The boy then returned home, fell ill and died without having increased his knowledge of Qur'ānic recitation. Al-Lamaṭī interprets the boy's vision as an indication that he'll be resurrected as a great Qur'ānic reciter. The boy's father is delighted by this. His grief is greatly relieved.

In [5] al-Dabbāgh says that everyone who passes by Hell, whether a believer or an infidel, beholds Mālik, the appointed guardian of Hell. The believer, however, knows that Mālik has been created from the secret of the faith of the believers. As a result, the believer isn't startled by the angel's awesome appearance. On the other hand, the infidel all but dies from the fear he experiences when he beholds the angel.

In section [6] al-Dabbāgh says: 'The weakest infidel has an amount of space in Hell equal to the earth and then ten times more in extent.' Al-Lamaṭī asks where the idea of Hell's narrowness comes from. Al-Dabbāgh replies that this is due to the torment the inhabitants suffer. But al-Lamaṭī says if a man is beaten night and day inside a spacious house, he experiences less anxiety than someone who undergoes the same treatment in a confined space. Al-Dabbāgh explains that this is only the case when the air around him contains no torment.

In [7] al-Dabbāgh says that the air in Hell is pure fire. A person in Hell runs about in torment screaming but this only increases his torment like when someone removes a burning log from a stove and shakes it. The burning simply increases.

And in section [8] he adds that in Hell there are houses, castles, gates, trees, walls and rivers just like in a city in the world. Yet in Hell the substance of every one of these objects consists of pure fire. If only a part of this fire emerged in the House of the world, the world would be set ablaze and burn up entirely.

In section [9] al-Dabbāgh then says that when the bondsman undertakes bad actions in the world, castles are built for him in Hell. If he repents or undertakes upright actions, castles are built for him in Paradise. He recounts the following story to illustrate

this point: A pious woman who's pregnant with a Support of the age goes to a wedding. There she's falsely accused of theft by the mistress of the house. This causes her great embarrassment and even inflicts some damage on her foetus. Castles are built in Hell for the false mistress of the house. These castles persist throughout the whole period during which the pious woman's child is born, he grows up, his parents pass away, and he then wishes to get married. Now the false woman gives him something of value he can use as a bride-price. God then removes her castles from Hell and accepts what she did for the child in question.

Al-Dabbāgh goes on to say that the bondsman doesn't move his foot nor does a vein twitch in his interior while he's asleep, without a castle being built for him in Hell or in Paradise. And this is the case even for his unintentional actions, so imagine what it's like when it comes to intentional actions that the law enjoins or prohibits. Al-Lamaṭī asks how castles are built because of actions that weren't intentional, especially by someone who's asleep. Al-Dabbāgh replies that what counts for building castles is the state a person returns to when acting intentionally. The state an infidel returns to when he acts intentionally is unbelief and rebellion against God. The state a believer returns to is the state of his faith and his love of the Prophet. This is what causes castles to be built in Hell or in Paradise, whether a person's actions come forth intentionally, unwittingly, or even while he's asleep.

In this connection, al-Lamaṭī notes that the religious scholars have long disagreed about whether infidels come under the applied rules of the *sharī'a*. Those who've studied the matter seriously hold that since the infidels reject the Prophet and his noble law, none of their actions fall within the category of 'permitted (*mubāḥ*)'. All their actions are sins and misdeeds.

Then al-Dabbāgh says that if you look at the castles and the gardens of the inhabitants in Hell or Paradise, you'll find that the punishments and delights that occur in the hereafter are connected with the bondsmen's actions in the world. And he tells a story that illustrates this point. A Friend of God saw a castle in Paradise for one of the believers who was still alive in the world. It appeared to be about to change from one state to another and to increase. 'Like a grape when juice and sweetness are about to occur in it.' He looked at the believer whose castle it was and observed him in his shop selling clothes. His mind was suddenly set in motion. He closed his shop, went home and told his wife: 'Today is a day for charitable gifts. Our neighbors don't have

anything.' He orders his wife to prepare food for the poverty-stricken mother and her daughters who live nearby, and he buys a bowl of *laban* to go with the food. The daughters are busy spinning when the man arrives with the food. They're delighted and when he leaves, they beseech God to accept his good deed. Meanwhile, the Friend of God beholds how the delights in Paradise that were set to increase for the charitable man have now done so, though the man himself knows nothing about it.

And al-Lamaṭī tells us that one day he asked al-Dabbāgh to invoke God against a tyrannical man whose oppression and arrogance were very harsh. All the people hated him and dissociated themselves from him. Al-Dabbāgh replied: 'Up to now his castles in Hell haven't been completed. There are still many castles [to be built] for him and he won't die until he's completed them.' In the case of another man known for his wickedness, at a given moment he stepped down from his office and the people greatly rejoiced. But al-Dabbāgh said: 'Alas, oh Sayyidī! Up till now So-and-so hasn't completed his quota.' The man then returned to his post and went back to practicing his wicked ways. He's still alive at the present time.

In section [10] al-Dabbāgh says about the spirits of animals that aren't subject to reward or punishment: 'Some of them are in Hell as punishment for the inhabitants of Hell, and some are in Paradise as a delight for the inhabitants of Paradise. The spirits of dogs, lions and wolves, and whichever of these animals are repulsive, are in Hell if they were with infidels in the world.' And one time, on the day of the Feast of the Immolation, he said that on occasions like this the angels descend to receive the spirits of the sacrificial animals. Noble angels can be seen above every city or locality where a sacrifice takes place. When an animal is sacrificed, if the person sacrificing has a righteous intention and he isn't motivated by pride or hypocrisy, the angels take the spirit of the animal and conduct it to the man's castles in Paradise. It then comes to be one of his delights in Paradise. If the person sacrificing has a corrupt intention, the angels conduct the animal's spirit to Hell and it becomes one of the torments prepared for him in Hell. The animal now consists entirely of fire. Its horns, all the hairs of its wool, and its whole body consist of sheer fire. Al-Dabbāgh tells al-Lamaṭī to relate these words to the people because they have great need of them.

In section [11] al-Dabbāgh says: 'A Jinnee in Hell isn't punished in burning fire because fire is his nature and causes him

no harm. Instead, he's punished in severe frost (*zamharīr*) and cold. And in the world the Jinn have a great fear of the cold.' In the summer you see the Jinn in the air being fearful that a cold breeze will blow. They're ready to take flight from the cold like a wild onager. As for water, the Jinn and the satans never enter it. Should they do so, they'd entirely dissolve, the way a human being dissolves in fire. The Jinnee's form resembles the shapes you see in the dark flames and coiling smoke of a potter's fire.

And al-Dabbāgh says that the punishment of murderers isn't like that of the inhabitants of Hell. They're tormented in a cold fire like that in which the Jinn are punished. Al-Dabbāgh formulates a similitude about this. A king has two fortresses, one in which he locks up the believers and another in which he locks up the Jews. Then if one of the believers disobeys him, he locks him up in the fortress for the Jews, and we know this causes him great humiliation to be joined in the same fortress with the Jews.

In [12] al-Lamaṭī reports that one time al-Dabbāgh said to him: 'Do you know who will experience the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection?' Al-Dabbāgh then explains that it's a person who's been given a perfect body, perfect intelligence and perfect health, and whose means of subsistence has been facilitated for him but he then goes on for one or two days, or even longer, without thinking of his Creator. And when sin is possible for him, he undertakes it with his complete body and his complete intelligence. He delights in this and feels no anxiety whatsoever with regard to his Lord. This is the man whose punishment will be the most complete. 'Heedlessness toward the Creator...especially while one is in a state of sin, is an awesome matter and a momentous affair.' The believer must experience fear and dread, for in this way the intensity of his punishment will be extenuated, if not totally eliminated.

\* \* \*

Here al-Lamaṭī brings the *Ibrīz* to a close with a prayer of supplication. He states his full name—Sayyidī Shaykh Abū'l-<sup>ḥ</sup>Abbās Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Sijilmāsī al-Lamaṭī—and beseeches God to bestow benefit upon him through the sciences he's learned from al-Dabbāgh. He then invokes God's blessings upon the Prophet Muḥammad, and upon his family and his Companions. Finally, he declares: 'There's no strength and no power save in God the Supreme, the Majestic!'

## AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Pp. 114-18. How al-Lamaṭī assessed al-Dabbāgh after meeting him and what he learned from him, and how everyone of religious status was impressed by al-Dabbāgh's words, all the more so since he wasn't formally educated in the religious sciences.

### SECTION ONE

Pp. 118-28. What went on before his birth. His father met al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī and married his niece. Al-Fishtālī predicts the future greatness of their son °Abd al-°Azīz al-Dabbāgh and on his deathbed leaves a 'trust' for him. Reports from eminent witnesses about al-Fishtālī's Friendship with God, his spiritual states and his pious behavior, and in particular examples of his clairvoyance.

### SECTION TWO

Pp. 128-44. How al-Dabbāgh gradually progressed until he received the great illumination. Al-Khaḍīr bestows an unusual *dhikr*-formula on him and entrusts him to °Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī. The description of his experiencing illumination (pp. 129-34). His meeting °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī who tempts him in the form of an attractive woman. His meeting with Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad, and afterwards with Muḥammad al-Lahwāj. Five of the numerous stories he heard on the occasion that he was accepted into the Dīwān (pp. 137-44).

### SECTION THREE

Pp. 144-97. Al-Dabbāgh's doctrinal belief and his attitude toward the *ḥadīths* that deal with the divine attributes. Some intimate miracles that occurred between al-Dabbāgh and al-Lamaṭī (pp. 148-56). Miracles that were witnessed and recorded by Muḥammad al-Zīrārī, the jurist and companion of the Shaykh (pp. 156-63). Miracles recorded by the jurist °Alī b. °Abd Allāh al-Ṣabbāghī (pp. 163-71). Other miracles recorded by the jurist °Abd Allāh b. °Alī al-Tāzī (pp. 171-74). And further miracles witnessed and recorded by al-°Arabī al-Ziyādī (pp. 174-78). Finally, al-Lamaṭī recounts miracles he witnessed that involved al-Dabbāgh and a third party (pp. 178-87). Al-Lamaṭī then describes how he examined the Shaykh about true

and false *ḥadīths*, and the difference between Qurʾānic verses and *ḥadīths*, and between normal and divine *ḥadīths*.

### (31) AUTHOR'S INTRODUCTION

Praise be to God Who has opened the path of intercession for His Friends and by their noble hand has brought about many an excellent benefit! Whoever follows their example triumphs and is rightly guided, whereas he who veers from their path suffers reversal and decline. Whoever clings to their hem prospers and attains the goal, while he who confronts them in opposition is cut off and destroyed.

I praise Him with the praise of one who knows there is no refuge from God except in God, and I thank Him with the thanks of one who has realized that both goods, that of this world and the world to come, are in His hands. I seek His assistance as one who relies on Him alone in resolving his affairs, and I invoke blessings upon our lord Muḥammad and upon his family, and upon Muḥammad and his family I utter salutations—equal in number to the creation of magnanimous God and His gifts.

Now to our topic: When God—praise and gratitude unto Him—bestowed on me the blessing of meeting the perfect Friend (*walī*),<sup>1</sup> the abundant Helper, the splendid Sufi, the luminous star of divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*), possessor of the sublime intimations (*ishārāt*) and the exalted explicit expressions (*ʿibārāt*), the sanctified higher truths and the Muḥammadan lights, the Lordly secrets and the aspirations associated with the Celestial Throne: establisher of the signposts of the path (*al-ṭarīqa*) after its traces had been concealed, revealer of the sciences of higher truths after the extinction of their lights: *sharīf*<sup>2</sup> and of noble birth, eminent and of distinguished descent, endowed with two pure kinship relations, the physical and the spiritual, and two good family origins, the manifest and the invisible, and two high-ranking offices of guardianship (*walāyatayn*), a worldly and a celestial one: descendant of Muḥammad, ʿAlī and Ḥasan: Pivot (*quṭb*) of those travelling the mystic path, bearer of the banner of the knowers of God (*ʿārifūn*), our Shaykh, our lord, our master, ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, the son of our lord and master Masʿūd (32)...<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *walī*: see Appendix, p. 925.

<sup>2</sup> *sharīf*: see Appendix, p. 925.

<sup>3</sup> His genealogy is traced back to ʿAlī b. Abī Ṭālib. See Appendix, p. 925.

Yes [when God bestowed on me this blessing], I came to witness his sciences, his divine insights (*ma'ārif*),<sup>4</sup> his good qualities and fine subtleties, and they overwhelmed me and dazzled me and led me along so completely that I was captivated.

I heard from him regarding the lord of creation and the banner of witnessing, our lord and master Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—knowledge about his awesome degree and his noble rank such as I've never heard from any human being since I came into existence, nor have I seen it recorded in a written work. Some of it you'll read about—if God the Sublime so wills—in the course of this book. And the people who are most knowledgeable about Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—will be most worthy of him on the Day of Judgement.

I also heard from him knowledge about God the Sublime and the loftiness of His attributes and the awesomeness of His names, such as can't be described and can't be sustained; it's only graspable as a gift from the Sovereign Creator.

(33) And I heard from him knowledge about the prophets of God the Sublime and His noble apostles—upon them be the most excellent blessing and the purest peace—which only he knew as if he'd lived with every prophet in his time and been one of the people of his day and age.

I also heard from him knowledge (*ma'rifa*) about the noble angels and the diversity of their kinds and the differences between their awesome ranks, and I'd thought human beings couldn't attain such science (*'ilm*) or advance to that level.

And I heard from him knowledge about the heavenly books and the *sharī'as* brought by prophets in previous ages and times gone by, such that if you heard it you'd be of the firm opinion and assert that he was the prince of the knowers of God and chief of all the Friends of God of his era.

And I heard from him knowledge about the Final Day and all it will contain in the way of gathering and dispersal, the narrow path (*ṣirāṭ*) and the scales, and the resplendent ease, such that were you to hear it you'd know he speaks from witnessing and direct vision, and reports on the basis of experience and divine knowledge (*'irfān*).

Thus, by then I was certain of his awesome Friendship with God (*walāya*), and I attached myself to his most protective person, remarking: 'Praise be to God Who has guided us hither, for we wouldn't have been guided if God hadn't guided us' (7/43).

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<sup>4</sup> *ma'ārif*: see Appendix, pp. 925 f.



Now, it's the wish of every believer to have knowledge of the above-mentioned matters; therein is his profitable and advantageous transaction. Indeed, our lord Gabriel—blessings and peace be upon him—asked our lord and master Muḥammad—blessings and peace be upon him—what comprised true faith. Muḥammad replied: 'That you believe in God, His angels and His books, His apostles and the Final Day, and in predestination, the good and bad of which comes from God.'<sup>5</sup>

Verily, the person most acquainted with these matters is the best of people with respect to faith, and most perfect in divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*). For this is the shining track and the path whose dawn sends forth light—God give you success!

And I met him—praise be to God—during the month of Rajab in the year 1125/July-August 1713. I then remained in his company and under the banner of his love, listening to his forms of divine insight (*maʿārif*) which are too numerous to be counted. Meanwhile, God the Sublime didn't cause me to record any of his words, but I went on listening to his words and understood them, and I mentioned them to some of my friends and a select few of my companions. Everyone who heard his words was amazed by them and said: 'We've never heard divine insights like these!' Their amazement was increased even further by the fact that the author of these insights—God be pleased with him—was formally unschooled<sup>6</sup> and hadn't (34) pursued religious learning. Indeed, he was among those who've completely turned away from religious learning, as far as appearances are concerned. And everyone of them who heard something [he said] experienced a feeling of delight for one or two days, or for one or two weeks. Whenever I encountered them or they encountered me, they'd ask me: 'Have you [recently] heard any of his divine insights or subtle instructive points (*fawā'id*)?' And I'd tell them what I could, and this caused their love and amazement to increase.

If not for fear of being tedious, I'd name those who heard his words from me and experienced a feeling of delight. Indeed, anyone who was informed of their names would realize the rank of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—because of their reputation among the people for Friendship with God, and the extreme respect and veneration they enjoy, as well as the frequency of their

<sup>5</sup> On this *ḥadīth* see here p. 364.

<sup>6</sup> By *ummī* al-Lamaʿī doesn't mean 'illiterate'. It's clear that al-Dabbāgh was able to read and write. In Chapter Six al-Lamaʿī informs us that some of what he presents there is based on written notes left by al-Dabbāgh.

intercourse with the godly and the Friends who are knowers of God, and the length of their perfect association with them through the heart, love and the mind. Thus they've come to know the secrets of Friendship with God, the qualities of the devoted disciples (*muhibbūn*)<sup>7</sup> and the traits of the knowers of God, along with the virtues of the sincere and the states of the rightly guided guides—this in addition to their being among the greatest religious scholars (*'ulamā'*) and most eminent jurists (*fuqahā'*).

And when they heard from me some of the sayings of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—they ordered me to continue my devoted association (*mahabba*) with who's reached the goal!

In sum, no one heard his words without immediately accepting them in full. And you'll become aware of th him and they said: 'By God, he's the perfect Friend and knower of Gois from what you read in the present book—if God the Sublime so wills—through His grace and His generosity!

When it was Rajab of the year 1129/June 1717, God—He is blessed and sublime—inspired me—unto Him be praise and gratitude—to write down some of his instructive sayings so that benefit from them might be disseminated and profit be had. Thus I compiled some of what I'd heard during the months of Rajab and Sha<sup>c</sup>bān, Ramaḍān, Shawwāl and Dhū'l-Qa<sup>c</sup>da. And behold, this filled nearly fifteen notebooks! I realized that were I to record what I'd heard over the last four years, it would fill more than two hundred notebooks. 'Not being recorded is a blight upon knowledge.'<sup>8</sup>

And know—God give you success—that everything I've written down is no more than a few drops from an abounding ocean that has no bottom and has no shore. Its waves buffeted one another and I was sprinkled with some of their drops—God give us profit through them—and these were the drops that had I recorded them would fill more than two hundred notebooks.

As for the sciences contained within the Shaykh's breast—God be pleased with him—only the exalted Lord Who's distinguished him with them is capable of counting them. God the Sublime give us success in what He wishes and what pleases Him, and bring about our felicity through the good He has preordained.

(35) Now I, al-Lamaṭī, have the following to say—and I ask God the Sublime for assistance and I implore Him; from Him I seek

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Meier, *Abū Sa<sup>c</sup>īd*, pp. 337 ff.

<sup>8</sup> Occurs as a proverb in the form: *āfat al-‘ilm al-nisyan*; cf. Maydānī, *Amthāl* I, p. 188.

support, Him I entreat and on Him I rely, for He alone and nothing else is my sufficiency—: this blessed compilation has for its purpose the collection of some of what I heard from our Shaykh—God be pleased with him! To begin with, however, it's necessary that I introduce the collection with an Introduction that treats the good qualities of this magnanimous Shaykh and describes his early life, how he came to experience illumination,<sup>9</sup> who conferred on him the *dhikr*,<sup>10</sup> and the shaykhs he met in the visible and the invisible world, and other things as well that will be mentioned. And the Introduction is divided into three sections.

### (39) SECTION ONE

On what preceded his affair before his birth.

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī<sup>11</sup> was one of the Friends of God the Sublime. He studied under Shaykh Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Nāṣir<sup>12</sup> the [spiritual] master of Wādī Dir°a<sup>13</sup>—God give us profit through him! Secondly,<sup>14</sup> he studied with Sayyidī Mubārak b. °Alī,<sup>15</sup> and this Sayyidī Mubārak was a maker of brooms (*shaṭāṭīb*). Sayyidī al-°Arabī met him in the Qarawiyyīn Mosque<sup>16</sup> in the divinely protected city of Fez. Sayyidī al-°Arabī, perceiving goodness and sanctity in his features, said to him: "Oh Sayyidī, teach me how the secret (*sirr*)<sup>17</sup> comes to those who possess it." Sayyidī Mubārak replied: "Sneeze!" Sayyidī al-°Arabī said: "Just now a sneeze doesn't come to me." And Sayyidī Mubārak said: "It's the same with me. How to teach you this doesn't come to me." Sayyidī al-°Arabī then attached himself to Sayyidī Mubārak. And he persevered in his love of him until he obtained what he obtained from him.'

<sup>9</sup> illumination: see Appendix, pp. 928 f.

<sup>10</sup> *dhikr*: see Appendix, p. 926.

<sup>11</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* II, pp. 297-300; in 1091/1680 he was appointed along with other men of religious standing to lead the prayer for rain; *Nashr* II, p. 292; and Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 277, fn. 2.

<sup>12</sup> Founder, along with his son Aḥmad, of the Nāṣiriyya Sufi order, a sister order of the Shādhiliyya; died 1085/1674. Cf. Meier, *Festschrift*, 'Maḥyā', p. 483/*Essays*, 'Maḥyā', p. 672.

<sup>13</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names.

<sup>14</sup> The *Nashr al-mathānī* mentions two other teachers: the famous scholar, al-Ḥasan b. Mas°ūd al-Yūsī (d. 1102/1691) and °Abd al-Qādir b. °Alī al-Fāsī; see Cigar, p. 235. Why doesn't al-Lamaṭī mention them?

<sup>15</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. EI, s.v. Qarawiyyīn; and Le Tourneau, *Fès*, pp. 453 ff.

<sup>17</sup> *sirr*: see Appendix, p. 926.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Sayyidī al-°Arabī had a sister and this sister had a daughter. The girl’s father was °Allāl al-Qamārashī<sup>18</sup> who possessed ample means and wealth. °Allāl al-Qamārashī died and a man from the people of Miknāsāt al-Zaytūn<sup>19</sup> married the sister after °Allāl al-Qamārashī. The daughter then remained with (40) Sayyidī al-°Arabī and he undertook to raise her and bring her up. He loved her dearly and consumed his goods on her behalf. And Sayyidī al-°Arabī, in addition to being a Friend of God, was a jurist and a Qur’ānic reciter (*muqri’*), and he taught religious learning to those suited for it. His students corrected their tablets in his presence and recited them to him. My father Mas°ūd was among those who received religious learning from him.

One day when the teaching session was over, Sayyidī al-°Arabī called my father and said to him: “I wish to marry you to my sister’s daughter.” Rāḍiya was the name of his sister, and the name of her daughter was Fāriḥa. My father Mas°ūd replied to him: “If you bestow her on me, I’ll accept.” He said: “I bestow her on you!” My father Mas°ūd replied: “I accept!” And Sayyidī al-°Arabī said to him: “The dowry and the trousseau are wholly my expense; no part of it is your concern.” This greatly pleased my father.

And Sayyidī al-°Arabī had been extremely affectionate to my father before that. Whenever he met him, he gave him whatever he had to hand and was cheerful with him.

When the marriage contract had been arranged between them, Sayyidī al-°Arabī provided his sister’s daughter with a trousseau and sent her to my father. When Sayyidī al-°Arabī met my father after this, he said to him: “Come to see me in my shop.” And he was a notary in the Street of the Notaries (*Simāt al-°udūl*).<sup>20</sup> From then on, my father went to see him every day following the afternoon prayers, and every day Sayyidī al-°Arabī gave him two *mawzūnas*.<sup>21</sup>

I heard Shaykh Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Rahmān al-Fāsī<sup>22</sup> say: “I was reciting my school tablet in the presence of Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī when your father Mawlāy Mas°ūd al-Dabbāgh arrived. Thereupon Sayyidī al-°Arabī gave him all the money the shop had taken in.”

<sup>18</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. EI, s.v. Miknās; Jean-Léon l’Africain, *Description* I, pp. 175-77.

<sup>20</sup> On *Simāt al-°udūl* see Le Tourneau, *Fès*, pp. 215 f.

<sup>21</sup> Not in Hinz, *Masse*; see Cigar, p. 271: a *mawzūna* is equal to six *fiṣ*.

<sup>22</sup> Probably the same person as in *Nashr al-mathānī* III, pp. 254 f.; died 1134/1721-22.

And his sister's daughter owned a good amount of farmland in the locality Zuwāgha.<sup>23</sup> She'd inherited it from her father °Allāl al-Qamārashi. Sayyidī al-°Arabī said to my father Mas°ūd: "The girl living with you is of legal age. Have her give you power of attorney to sell the land she owns in Zuwāgha. Go sell the land and see that you sell every part of it." He then went to his wife and she gave him power of attorney. And she had a sister by the same father. My father went to her so she'd give him power of attorney to sell all the land, but she refused. He then sold my mother's portion. Her sister went on receiving an income from her land for about three years. But then (41) the Wadāya<sup>24</sup>—a tribe renowned for their wickedness—came and took the people's land in Zuwāgha by force, and her sister's land was confiscated with the rest. From that day she received no more profit from it. They realized that this had been an act of clairvoyance (*kashf*) on the part of Sayyidī al-°Arabī.'

Al-Dabbāgh said: 'Sayyidī al-°Arabī went on being very affectionate to my father, and he used to bring him wonderful food. I heard my mother say—God the Sublime have mercy on her: "Since Sayyidī al-°Arabī died, we haven't eaten *al-ṭanjiyya*.<sup>25</sup> He used to prepare it for us every day—God have mercy on him! After leading the people in the evening prayers in his mosque, he'd knock at our door. We'd come forth to him and he'd place it in my hands. This is the way he treated us every day until his death—God the Sublime have mercy on him!"

And Sayyidī al-°Arabī used to say to us: "A child will be born to you whose name will be °Abd al-°Azīz. He'll have a great rank as regards Friendship with God."

And I heard my mother say: "Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī said: 'I beheld the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and he told me: "A great Friend of God will be born to your sister's daughter." I asked: "Oh Prophet of God, who will be his father?" He replied: "His father will be Mas°ūd al-Dabbāgh."'"

This was the chief reason Sayyidī al-°Arabī desired a connection through marriage with my father Mas°ūd.'

<sup>23</sup> Fifteen miles west of Fez; cf. Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description I*, p. 178.

<sup>24</sup> Text has *Waddiyya*; cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 85; Cigar, index, s.v. *Ūdāya*.

<sup>25</sup> *al-ṭanjiyya*: a kind of mouton stew; cf. Beaussier, *Dictionnaire*.

And Sayyidī al-°Arabī wished to live up until the birth of Mawlāy °Abd al-°Azīz, but when the epidemic of the year 1090/1679<sup>26</sup> occurred, Sayyidī al-°Arabī died in that epidemic.

‘When his death was at hand, he sent for my father Mas°ūd who came to him, and he said: “Where’s your wife?” They sent for her as well, and when they were both present, Sayyidī al-°Arabī said to them: “This is a trust from God (*amānat Allāh*) for the two of you to keep until °Abd al-°Azīz is born to you. Then give him this trust.”

The trust consisted of a skullcap (*shāshiyya*) and black *kuttābī*<sup>27</sup> shoes, for this is what was worn at the time.’

Al-Dabbāgh said: ‘My mother took the trust and put it away safely. But the child of her first pregnancy was a girl. Then when a certain amount of time went by, she became pregnant with me and I was born to them. Time passed until I reached puberty and was fasting during Ramaḍān. God the Sublime then moved my mother (42) to think of the trust. She went and brought it to me, saying: “Oh my son, Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī bequeathed this trust to you.”

I took hold of the trust and I placed the skullcap on my head and put the shoes on my feet. Just then a great heat came over me so that my eyes filled with tears. And I perceived what Sayyidī al-°Arabī said to me and I understood his instructions—praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!

And this took place in the year 1109/1697-8.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is what I heard from al-Dabbāgh concerning Sayyidī al-°Arabī. I never met Sayyidī al-°Arabī myself. Indeed, at the time that he died I was a babe in the cradle, being six months old or thereabouts. But I’ve heard people praise him fondly and they remember his ritual scrupulosity, his asceticism and his nocturnal vigils.

I heard from trustworthy informants that Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh,<sup>28</sup> the great Friend and celebrated knower of God, the [spiritual] master of the neighborhood al-Makhfiyya<sup>29</sup>—God be

<sup>26</sup> According to the *Nashr*, al-Fishtālī died on 11 Jumādā I 1092/29 May 1681 but al-Lamaṭī gives a different date for his death; see also Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 277, fn. 2; on the epidemic of 1090 see Cigar, p. 133.

<sup>27</sup> In the year 1101/1689-90 sultan Ismā°il forbade the wearing of black shoes; *Nashr* III, p. 16/Cigar, p. 146. Could the adjective *kuttābī* refer to shoes worn by pupils in a Qur°ān school (*kuttāb*)?

<sup>28</sup> See Lévi-Provençal, *Chorfas*, p. 277; *Nashr al-mathānī* III, pp. 182 ff.; on his father Muḥammad b. °Abd Allāh Ma°n al-Andalusī (d. 1062/1652) cf. *Nashr* II, pp. 55 ff.; in 1104/1692 Aḥmad renovated the *zāwiya* founded by his father in 1048/1638 in the Makhfiyya neighborhood; cf. ‘Kritik am Neo-Sufismus’, p. 169.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index; *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names.

pleased with him—used to praise Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī very much and would say: ‘Sayyidī al-°Arabī was surely one of the great Friends and knowers of God.’

And I knew the loftiness of the said Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh and the trust (*amāna*) he possessed and the unanimous accord of the people concerning his Friendship with God and their agreement that he possessed the secret (*sirr*) and clairvoyance (*kashf*), and I knew the brilliance of the light of his deeper vision (*baṣīra*).

I heard the following from the reputable notary and jurist Sayyidī °Abd al-Qādir Aḥmāmūsh<sup>30</sup> who lived in the city of Ṣafrū<sup>31</sup>—and he was one of the companions of Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh and among those who often visited him. He said: ‘When Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī died, Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh—God give us benefit through him—said to us: “Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī was indeed one of the great Friends of God. But if it weren’t that he’s dead, I wouldn’t tell you anything about his affairs.”’

And Aḥmāmūsh said: ‘I was one of Sayyidī al-°Arabī’s students and I attended his lessons and was attached to him. We never suspected he was a Friend of God because he kept his situation hidden.’

And he said: ‘I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: “When I was with Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī in the locality of Sāyis,<sup>32</sup> he said to me: ‘Something has come to pass!’ I asked: ‘What is it?’ He replied: ‘Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Nāṣir<sup>33</sup> has just died—God have mercy on him!’ I asked: ‘How do you know this?’ He said: ‘He’s died without any doubt.’”’

Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh related: “He was surprised (43) by this himself, and then he said to me: ‘Look at who’s there before us!’ And behold, there was a figure in the far distance. And he said: ‘He’s come to give us the news of Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Nāṣir.’ Then we set off walking until we met the man and we asked him: ‘What news is there?’ He replied: ‘Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Nāṣir has died.’”’

And he said: ‘I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: “It was during the time of the siege [of Fez] after the death of Zaydān<sup>34</sup> and the gun emplacements in al-Qaṣba al-Jadīda<sup>35</sup> were causing us

<sup>30</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>31</sup> The text has *Ṣafr wa-kāna*; cf. Cigar, index: Sefrou; Jean-Léon l’Africain, *Description I*, p. 310.

<sup>32</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names/Cigar, index.

<sup>33</sup> See fn. 12 above.

<sup>34</sup> Zaydān: a son of sultan Ismāʿīl, killed in Fez during a revolt in 1672; cf. Cigar, pp. 119 and 121. The sultan laid siege to the city.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 84.

damage. They were aiming the cannons<sup>36</sup> from them so that their missiles were landing near the houses of Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh.”

Sayyidī Aḥmad said: “I went to look at the locations of the gun emplacements. And I went out without anyone knowing the intention in my heart. Just then Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī met me and said to me: ‘Where are you off to?’ I told him: ‘To take a look at the gun emplacements.’ But he said: ‘Don’t do that.’ I said to him: ‘This is something I must do.’ He replied: ‘If you must go, I’ll go with you.’ And so he accompanied me. Every time I was about to look at a gun emplacement, Sayyidī al-°Arabī drew my attention and I’d oblige him, until one time I escaped his notice and I looked at a gun emplacement on a tower. Just then the tower collapsed with the people on it.”

Aḥmāmūsh said: ‘I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: ‘One day I was in the Qarawīyyīn Mosque and I met Sayyidī al-°Arabī. [At that time] I had no intention of getting married. When he saw me, he said to me: “The woman’s a blessing.” I asked: “What woman?” He said to me: “The woman you’re going to marry.” I said: “I have nothing like that in mind.” And he replied: “You’ll marry her!” Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh said: “In no more than seven days behold, the thought of marriage was aroused in my mind and I got married.”’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I heard more or less the same story going back to Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh, but it wasn’t clear in the story who had transmitted it.

(44) Aḥmāmūsh said: ‘I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: “I was with Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī. He began to talk to me about the Friends of God and I then mentioned to him a number of them. He said to me: ‘I’m talking to you about the great among them. As for the minor ones, between here and Banū Yāzagha’”<sup>37</sup>—which is located one stage from Fez—“I know four hundred Friends of God.”’

And I, al-Lamaṭī, heard this story going back to Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh but again the person who transmitted it was unknown.

Aḥmāmūsh said: ‘I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: “Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī hid his spiritual states and concealed his secrets (*asrār*). One day while talking with some of his students, he said: ‘Do you think clairvoyance (*kashf*) is something impressive?

<sup>36</sup> Read *anfād* instead of *anqād*; cf. Cigar, p. 35.

<sup>37</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names; Jean-Léon l’Africain, *Description* I, pp. 308 f.



It's just slyness and being quick-witted. If you're in doubt about it, look at me. Now you know me and you know all my states. You know I'm not a Friend of God.' And they replied: 'We know you and we know you're not a Friend of God.'

Then Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī said to one of them by way of actually revealing something: 'Aren't you intending to do this and that at such-and-such a time?' The student replied: 'Yes, I am!' Sayyidī al-°Arabī said: 'It's like I said. Clairvoyance is just slyness.' So they believed him and thought that clairvoyance was slyness." He added: "Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī was amusing himself at their expense."

Aḥmāmūsh said: 'I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: "One day I entered the Qarawiyyīn Mosque and I found Sayyidī al-°Arabī there. His face had a troubled expression and his complexion was sallow. He said: 'Right now I have nothing to say to you or anyone else.' I asked him: 'Why's that?' He replied: 'I read the following verse in the *Tā'iyya* of Ibn al-Fāriḍ:

If a desire for other than you arose in me

Even inadvertently, I'd conclude I'm an apostate.<sup>38</sup>

Well I've found that a desire entered my mind for something besides *them*, and I've concluded I'm an apostate. So there's no good in me, and no good comes from associating with me or knowing me.' And he was very upset."

Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh said: (45) "I told him: 'But this was [only] a particular state that came over Ibn al-Fāriḍ and it didn't remain with him.' Sayyidī al-°Arabī exclaimed: 'God reward you! Your words have restored my peace of mind.'"

Aḥmāmūsh said: 'Mawlāy al-°Arabī al-Qādirī<sup>39</sup> was one of those who had some grasp concerning the path of the Sufis (*al-qawm*). Evidence of the path's lights appeared in him. And he was among those who knew Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī. But he didn't think Sayyidī al-°Arabī possessed Friendship with God. He simply believed he was one of the religious scholars and nothing more. Whenever Sayyidī al-°Arabī met him, he was delighted and received him with the warmest welcome.

Then one day Mawlāy al-°Arabī came upon Sayyidī al-°Arabī in the company of Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh and he heard the two of them talking about divine insights and the higher sciences. Mawlāy al-°Arabī al-Qādirī asked Sayyidī Muḥammad Durrayj al-

<sup>38</sup> *Dīwān Ibn al-Fāriḍ*, p. 73, verse 65.

<sup>39</sup> Unidentified.

Tiṭṭāwānī:<sup>40</sup> “Has Sayyidī al-°Arabī spoken with Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh about these divine insights other times besides today? Or was it only today he spoke to him about this?” Sayyidī Muḥammad Durrayj replied to him: “The two of them are always talking about these divine insights.”

Our companion Sayyidī °Abd al-Qādir al-Mushidd<sup>41</sup> related: “Mawlāy al-°Arabī knew then that Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī was a Friend of God. Moreover, Sayyidī al-°Arabī knew that Mawlāy al-°Arabī knew this.” He added: “From that day whenever Sayyidī al-°Arabī came across him, he hid from him. The joy and warm welcome that had previously existed when he met him ceased because of his urgency to conceal his affairs.”

And I heard our above-mentioned companion say: “I was residing in Fez during the siege of Zaydān<sup>42</sup> and the people of Fez were finding it difficult as the siege wore on, and they suffered great harm. Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī would say: ‘Whether you drag it out or whether you make it brief, there’s no getting around Mawlāy Ismā°il.’<sup>43</sup> He repeated these words continually until he was known for them. The people who didn’t like the sultan said: ‘Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī is an Ismā°il supporter.’ Then before one night and a day elapsed, proof appeared of what Sayyidī al-°Arabī had said. They declared peace and sought assurances of protection from the sultan—God give him victory—and reconciliation was brought about. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!”

And I heard him say: “We heard the neighbors of Sayyidī al-°Arabī report: (46) ‘Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī generally stayed awake all night reciting the Qur°ān.’ At the beginning of the night they’d hear his recitations and it would continue like that until divine states and inspirations descended over him. By the end of the night they’d only hear the movement of his body when he was agitated or shook or rolled on the ground. God be pleased with him and give us profit through him—amen!”

And I, al-Lamaṭī, heard the trustworthy and reputable jurist Sayyidī al-Mahdī b. Yaḥyā<sup>44</sup> say: ‘Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh—God give us profit through him—would frequently praise Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī and he described him as possessing complete

<sup>40</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* III, p. 217; died 1126/1714.

<sup>41</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>42</sup> See fn. 34 above.

<sup>43</sup> The second sultan of the °Alawī dynasty whose long rule extended from 1089/1672 to 1139/1727; see EI s.n.

<sup>44</sup> Unidentified.

Friendship with God and the great unveiling (*al-kashf al-kabīr*).<sup>45</sup> He recounted many anecdotes about him in this regard. From among these I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh say: "I was with Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī at the al-Khamīs Market.<sup>46</sup> Sultan Mawlāy Rashīd<sup>47</sup>—God have mercy on him—was ruling and this sovereign was at the peak of his power. No challengers and no opponents remained. His rule was easy and he enjoyed happiness. Then while I was with Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī at the al-Khamīs Market, he said to me: 'This very moment I hear the dirge for Mawlāy Rashīd, indicating that he's dead. His death occurred in Marrakesh.' I replied: 'How can this be? At this moment his rule is flourishing.' After only a short while news of Mawlāy Rashīd's death arrived—God have mercy on him!"<sup>48</sup>

And I heard the above-mentioned Sayyidī al-Mahdī say: 'I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh relate: "Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī was one of the people of goodness and piety. He possessed visible Friendship with God and was one of those who observe the outward forms of divine law with perfect observance. One day I was with him in the Qarawiyyīn Mosque and we were talking. While talking, we heard the muezzin sound the call to prayer. Sayyidī al-°Arabī then left the mosque. After being absent for a brief moment, he returned.

I asked him: 'What did you do when you went outside? It's not like you to do something without saying why you left. Certainly not at the hour of congregational prayer—without saying why you left. Why did you go outside?'

He didn't answer (47) me but I pressed him. Then he said: 'Aren't you inquisitive! I went out to undertake the steps of one who comes to the mosque of his Lord to pray there. The steps I took before sitting down with you were for the purpose of sitting with you.'

This behavior on his part utterly amazed me. And I understood that he was one of those who observe the rules of the *sharī°a*."

And I heard him say: 'I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh relate: "Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī had an agreeable disposition and was forbearing and patient in putting up with annoyance from people. Moreover, he was a notary. One day he witnessed just testimony against a man and the man became angry. He proceeded to abuse

<sup>45</sup> The same as *al-fath al-kabīr*; see Appendix, pp. 928 f.

<sup>46</sup> Khamīs Market: Sūq al-Khamīs, an important market located to the west of Fez outside the city walls; cf. Cigar, p. 165.

<sup>47</sup> Founder of the °Alawī dynasty; EI s.n.; *Nashr al-mathānī* II, p. 192.

<sup>48</sup> Rashīd died 11 Dhū'l-Ḥijja 1082/11 March 1672; toward dawn, four days later, news of his death arrived in Fez; *Nashr al-mathānī* II, p. 192/Cigar, p. 19.

Sayyidī al-°Arabī with curses and insults. When the man finished cursing him, Sayyidī al-°Arabī did no more than say to him: ‘As for the testimony I witnessed against you, its basis in law is such-and-such, its legal implication is such-and-such, and the basis of its correctness such-and-such.’

He went no further than to tell him the basis for what he did, and made no mention of the man’s curses and insults. The man who’d cursed him was amazed at Sayyidī al-°Arabī’s good disposition. He felt remorse for what he’d said, and he repented.”

And I heard the above-mentioned Sayyidī al-Mahdī say: ‘We never ceased to hear praise of Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī from his neighbors, and they’d recall him with affection. They even reported about him: “When he bought meat for his household, he used to buy some for his neighbors too. He’d say: ‘I’m not going to cook meat just for myself and leave my neighbors without any meat.’”’

I heard more than one reliable informant say: ‘Sayyidī al-°Arabī came to the Zāwiya of al-Makhfiyya<sup>49</sup> before its big door existed, that is the big door to the mosque, and he looked at the place where the big door is today and said: “A door will have to be opened in this place so people can enter the mosque through it.”’

Many persons heard him say these words, including Sayyidī al-Mahdī al-Fāsī,<sup>50</sup> the commentator on the *Dalā’il al-khayrāt*. Before one night and a day had elapsed, they opened the door in the mentioned place. This is the well-known door that leads to the building for ritual ablutions.

I, al-Lamaṭī, heard the reputable notary al-Ḥājj Muḥammad b. Sūda<sup>51</sup> say: ‘I heard So-and-so relate: “I called on Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī at his home and I found him moving about and dancing. I asked him: ‘What’s this?’ He replied: (48) ‘This is the bounty of God which He confers on whom He wishes (5/54).”’

I heard the notary Sayyidī al-°Ālim al-Shāmī<sup>52</sup> say: ‘I was talking to Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī and I praised our day and age and its rulers, and I reproached the previous rulers such as Ibn Ṣāliḥ<sup>53</sup> and

<sup>49</sup> See fn. 29 above.

<sup>50</sup> On him see GAL, S II, p. 360; died 1063/1653; his full name: Muḥammad al-Mahdī b. Aḥmad b. Sūda; the title of his commentary: *Maṭālī° al-masarrāt*. On the *Dalā’il al-khayrāt* see Meier, *Festschrift*, ‘Maḥyā’, pp. 474-78/*Essays*, ‘Maḥyā’, pp. 662-66; and especially Witkam, *Vroomheid*, pp. 53-56.

<sup>51</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>52</sup> Probably same as the person mentioned in *Nashr al-mathānī* III, p. 279; died 1136/1723.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Cigar, p. 111; an officer put to death for disloyalty after sultan Rashīd conquered Fez in 1665.

his kind. He then mentioned to me—God be pleased with him—the things that would occur at the hands of rulers in the future. I realized that this was one of his predictions based on clairvoyance—God be pleased with him!

And I heard Sayyidī al-°Ālim al-Shāmī, as well as others, say: ‘Sayyidī al-°Arabī was a notary who used to certify testimony. He was extremely scrupulous and would only sign a certificate if the matter was as clear as day. If someone offered him a high fee, he’d refuse it. He only accepted a modest sum. When someone came to him for his witnessing and he was paid what he was paid and then a second person came for his witnessing, he’d say to him: “Go to my neighbor. I’ve already made a first sale today!”’

Sayyidī al-°Arabī’s thaumaturgic gifts—God be pleased with him—were numerous indeed, and his pious virtues were famous among the people. It’s sufficient regarding his glory and his loftiness to mention the link that existed between him and our Shaykh,<sup>54</sup> Support of the era, lord of the day and age, [°Abd al-°Azīz al-Dabbāgh]. God the Sublime, through His grace, His bounty and His generosity, cause us to be devoted to them. Amen! Amen! Amen for the sake of the rank of the chief of the prophets and the apostles—God’s blessings and peace be upon him and upon them one and all!

## (51) SECTION TWO

How he gradually progressed until he experienced illumination—God be pleased with him—and mention of the knowers of God from whom he inherited, both in the visible and the invisible world.

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘From the moment I dressed myself in “the trust (*al-amāna*)” that Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī bequeathed to me and I understood what he said to me concerning it, God aroused a longing in my heart for the pure form of being God’s bondsman (*al-°ubūdiyya al-khālīṣa*).<sup>55</sup> I set about searching for it with an intense searching. Anyone I heard about that people took as their shaykh and referred to as possessing Friendship with God—I went to him and took him as my shaykh. But once I’d taken him as my shaykh and spent some time reciting his litanies

<sup>54</sup> After the words *shaykhinā* the editor mistakenly introduces the name Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh in brackets.

<sup>55</sup> On this old motif in pious Islamic thought and Sufism see Ritter, *Meer der Seele*, 19. Kapitel, ‘Die Werke. Gottessklavenschaft’, pp. 278-80/*Ocean*, Chapter Nineteen, ‘Works: Being God’s Slave’, pp. 289-92.

(*awrād*), my breast would grow narrow and I wouldn't experience any increase. I'd then leave him and go to someone else whom I took as my shaykh. But the same thing would happen. I'd then leave him and go to another still, and the same thing would happen again. So from the year 1109/1697 to the year 1121/1709, I remained in a state of perplexity about my situation.

Every Thursday night I'd spend in the tomb of the upright Friend of God Sayyidī °Alī b. Ḥirzihim,<sup>56</sup> and I'd recite the *Burda*<sup>57</sup> with the others who spent the night there. We'd recite the whole of it every Thursday night. One night it was a Thursday night as usual, and we recited the *Burda* and completed the whole of it. I then came forth from the shrine and I found a man sitting under the consecrated lote-tree (*al-sidra al-muḥarrara*) which stands by the door of the shrine. He began to speak to me and through clairvoyance revealed to me matters from my interior. I realized he was one of the Friends and knowers of God—He is mighty and glorious! I said to him: "Oh my lord, bestow the litany on me and implant in me the *dhikr*." He ignored what I said and turned to other matters. I went on pressing him with my request but he refused. His purpose was to evince from me the true resolve not to abandon what I'd hear from him. And I continued like this until dawn rose and the dust was visible on the minaret.<sup>58</sup> Then he said: "I won't bestow the litany on you unless you swear to me by God that you won't abandon it." And I swore to him by God and took an oath that I (52) wouldn't abandon it. I thought he'd bestow on me a litany similar to those of my former shaykhs. But behold, he said to me: "Say seven thousand times every day: 'Oh Lord God, for the sake of the rank of Muḥammad b. °Abd Allāh—God's blessings and peace be upon him—bring me and my lord Muḥammad b. °Abd Allāh together in this world before the hereafter!'"<sup>59</sup> Then we stood up and Sayyidī °Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī, the custodian of the shrine, joined us and the man said

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 114. One of the major shrines of Fes just outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ. Abū'l-Ḥasan °Alī b. Ḥirzihim (also b. Ḥarāzam, Ḥarāzim, Ḥarzam) was a twelfth-century Sufi saint. Mawlāy Rashīd, the first °Alawī sultan, was buried in the *rawḍa* of the shrine at the order of his brother, sultan Ismā°il.

<sup>57</sup> A poem by al-Būṣīrī (d. 694/1296) that extols the unique qualities of the Prophet; GAL, S I, p. 467; see here p. 223, fn. 36.

<sup>58</sup> dust...on the minaret: translation uncertain.

<sup>59</sup> Aḥmad b. Idrīs (1749-1837) was immersed in the tradition—not in a Sufi order—founded by al-Dabbāgh (cf. 'Traditionalismus', pp. 257 ff., 263; *Letters*, pp. 64 f.) and has incorporated these lines into his famous *Ṣalāt °aẓīmiyya* (cf. 'Two Sufi Treatises', p. 162).

to him: "I urge you to take good care of this person." Sayyidī °Umar replied: "Oh Sayyidī, [as of now] he's my lord!"

And when his spirit was on the point of departing and he was about to transfer to the hereafter, Sayyidī °Umar said to me: "Do you know who the man was who implanted the *dhikr* in you by the consecrated lote-tree?" I replied: "No, oh Sayyidī, I don't!" He said: "That was our lord al-Khaḍir<sup>60</sup>—peace be upon him!"

Our Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: '[Later on] when God gave me illumination, I understood what Sayyidī °Umar had told to me.'

And he said: 'I persisted in performing this *dhikr*. The first day it was difficult for me and I didn't complete it until night had fallen. But little by little it began to get easier. My body grew accustomed to the *dhikr* so that I'd complete it by noon. Then it grew easier for me until I'd complete it by mid-morning. Finally, it became so easy I'd complete it by the time the sun had risen. Meanwhile, I remained with Sayyidī °Umar, I loving him and he loving me in God, up until the year 1125/1713. Then death came upon him. I was sitting with him and he said: "Do you know who my shaykh is?" I replied: "No, oh Sayyidī, I don't." He said: "Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī!" He didn't tell me his shaykh was Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī until the moment he departed from the world.'

And our Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'Praise be to God, I received all the secrets (*asrār*) and blessings which Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī had possessed, through the mediation of Sayyidī °Umar. This I beheld directly after receiving illumination. Sayyidī °Umar wasn't carrying all the secrets of Sayyidī al-°Arabī but he possessed some of them. Whereas God—He is blessed and exalted—deigned to bestow all of them on me, and He also gave me a further increase such as I'm incapable of rendering due thanks for. And Sayyidī al-°Arabī was one of the knowers of God—He is mighty and glorious—and among those who attended the Council of the godly (Dīwān al-šāliḥīn)<sup>61</sup> during his lifetime.' I asked: 'And after his death as well?' He replied: 'No.'

(53) I heard him mention the same thing about Sayyidī Maṣṣūr,<sup>62</sup> and he was one of the Pivots (*aqṭāb*). He said: 'Sayyidī Maṣṣūr was one of the people of the Dīwān while he was alive but after his death

<sup>60</sup> On al-Khaḍir see Franke, index; our passage is translated there on pp. 500 f.; already translated in Rinn, *Marabouts*, pp. 400 f.

<sup>61</sup> Dīwān al-šāliḥīn: the Council of the godly has supernatural powers over everything that happens in the world. See Chapter Four for a full description.

<sup>62</sup> On him see p. 727.

he no longer attended it.' And he gave a reason for that, which will be mentioned later in this book—if God is willing!

Our Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'Three days after the death of Sayyidī °Umar I experienced illumination<sup>63</sup>—praise be to God! God made known to me the reality of our souls—praise and gratitude be unto Him! That was on a Thursday, the 8th of Rajab, in the year 1125/31 July 1713. I'd gone out of our house and God the Sublime had bestowed on me four *mawzūnas* at the hand of an alms-giver from among His servants. I bought some fish and took it back to our house. My wife said to me: "Go to the shrine of Sayyidī °Alī b. Ḥirzihim and bring us some oil to fry the fish with."

I set off and when I reached the Bāb al-Futūḥ,<sup>64</sup> a shudder went through me. Then I experienced great trembling and my flesh began to feel very numb and prickly. I went on walking while this was happening. The state increased until I came to the tomb of Yaḥyā b. °Allāl<sup>65</sup>—God give us profit through him—and that's on the way to Sayyidī °Alī b. Ḥirzihim's shrine. The state intensified and my breast began beating so hard that my collar-bone struck against my beard. I exclaimed: "This is death, without any doubt!"

Then something came forth from my body that resembled steam from a vessel for preparing couscous. My body began to grow tall until it became taller than any tall man. Things began to reveal themselves to me and they appeared as if they were right in front of me. I saw all the towns and cities and small villages. I saw everything that's on this land. I saw the Christian woman breast-feeding her son and he was in her arms. I saw all the seas and I saw all the seven earths and all the beasts of burden and the creatures found on them. I saw the sky and it was as if I was above it looking at what it contains. Then behold, there was a great light like sudden lightning that came from every direction. The light appeared above me and below me, on my right and on my left, from in front of me and from behind. An extreme cold from it came over me so that I thought I'd died.

I quickly lay down face first so as not to see (54) the light. And when I lay down I perceived that my body was all eyes. My eye saw, my head saw, my leg saw, and all my limbs saw. And I looked at the clothes I had on and found that they didn't hinder the sight which

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<sup>63</sup> Typically a disciple is represented as only receiving illumination after the demise of his shaykh. Cf. 'Two Sufi Treatises', p. 161 and fn. 118 that refers to *Ibriz* II, p. 294; here p. 865; see also 'Eighteenth Century', p. 359 and fn. 343.

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 139.—Frequently mentioned in the *Ibriz*.

<sup>65</sup> Not mentioned in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.



was spread throughout my body. I realized that lying face down or standing up made no difference.

This situation continued with me for a time and then it ceased. I returned to the state I'd been in before. I turned back to the city and was unable to reach the shrine of Sayyidī ʿAlī b. Ḥirzihim. I felt afraid for myself and I fell to weeping. Then the state came over me again for a time and then it ceased. So it would come over me one moment and cease another moment, until it became accustomed to my body. It would then be absent a moment during the day and a moment during the night. And then it was never absent.

God the Sublime had mercy on me and put me in contact with some of the knowers of God among His Friends. What happened was this. When I rose the morning after experiencing illumination, I set out to pay a visit to the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs<sup>66</sup>—God give us profit through him—and in the Street of the Notaries (*Simāṭ al-ʿudūl*) I met the jurist Sayyidī al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Jarandī,<sup>67</sup> who was the imam of Mawlāy Idrīs' shrine. I told him what I'd seen and what I'd experienced. He said: "Come with me to our house." And I went with him to his house by al-Saqāya<sup>68</sup> which is near the washermen in the quarter of the copper-workers.<sup>69</sup> He entered and I went with him. He sat on a bench that was there inside and I sat with him. He said: "Tell me again what you saw." And I repeated it for him. I looked at him and he was crying. He said: "There is no god but God! For four hundred years we haven't heard anyone recount something like this!" Al-Dabbāgh said: 'He gave me many dirhems.' And another time he said: 'He gave me five *mithqāls* [of silver]<sup>70</sup> and told me: "Take care of your needs with this. When you've spent it, don't ask anyone else to give you something. Come back to me and I'll give you what you require. And I urge you to go to the shrine of Sayyidī ʿAbd Allāh al-Tāwudī.<sup>71</sup> There you'll find (55) what's good for you."

Then I left him and I never saw him after that day. A fatal illness came over him and he died—God have mercy on him! But I acted according to his counsel. I set out for the shrine of Sayyidī ʿAbd

<sup>66</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 132. Perhaps the most important shrine in Fez; patronized (repaired) by sultan Ismāʿīl.

<sup>67</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* III, p. 215; was a student of Aḥmad Maʿn; died 1125/1713; sultan Ismāʿīl appointed him *qāḍī* of Fez but Aḥmad refused the post.

<sup>68</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 132.

<sup>70</sup> *mithqāl*: one *mithqāl* of silver=ten *ūqīyyas* of silver; see Cigar, p. 271.

<sup>71</sup> Not mentioned in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

Allāh al-Tāwudī and when I reached the Bāb al-Jisa,<sup>72</sup> behold there was a black man outside the Bāb. He began to stare at me, and I said to myself: "What can this man want?" He was standing by the large rock next to which al-Majdī<sup>73</sup> sits. When I came near him, he took hold of my hand and greeted me. I returned his greeting, and he said to me: "I want you to come back to the mosque with me"—he meant the Bāb al-Jisa Mosque<sup>74</sup>—"so we may sit a while together, and talk and converse." I replied: "It would be my pleasure."

I went back with him and we sat in the mosque and he began to talk to me. He said I was sick with a certain illness, that I'd seen such-and-such and had such-and-such an experience. And he related everything I'd experienced. With his words, by God, he removed the burden from me. I knew then he was one of the Friends and knowers of God the Sublime. He said his name was °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī<sup>75</sup> and that he was from Barnawā,<sup>76</sup> and that he'd come to Fez to see me. I was delighted and recognized the blessing of the words of the jurist Sayyidī al-Ḥājj Aḥmad al-Jarandī<sup>77</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him! He was surely a person of benevolence and godliness.

Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī remained with me. He guided me, directed me and strengthened me, and the fear in my heart concerning what I'd seen was removed. This occurred during the rest of Rajab, Sha°bān, Ramaḍān, Shawwāl and Dhū'l-Qa°da, up to the 10th of Dhū'l-Ḥijja.

Then when it was the third day of the Feast of the Immolation, I beheld the lord of creation—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī said: "Oh Sayyidī °Abd al-°Azīz, before today I was afraid for your sake. But today since God the Sublime, through His mercy, has united you with the lord of creation—God's blessings and peace be upon him—my heart feels safe and my mind is assured. I therefore leave you in the hands of God—He is mighty and glorious!"

He then returned to his own country and left me. The reason for his staying with me was to protect me from darkness entering into me during the illumination I experienced. This was until I should

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 123.

<sup>73</sup> Text uncertain.

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 132.

<sup>75</sup> See O'Fahey, *Enigmatic*, p. 41. Al-Qādirī knows another °Abd Allāh al-Barnawī (*Nashr al-mathānī* II, pp. 224-28) but he died in 1088/1677. According to p. 129 above, these events involving our al-Barnāwī took place after 1709.

<sup>76</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names; the *nisba* derives from the central Sudanic state of Borno/Kanem (Bornū or Barnū); EI, s.v. Bornū.

<sup>77</sup> See here p. xi, fn. 7.

experience the illumination of beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—because then there's no cause for fear concerning an enlightened person (*maftūh*), but before that there is cause for fear.'

(56) And al-Dabbāgh said: 'There are some stories about what occurred to me with him. Among the strangest is that one day he appeared before me as a woman, and she attempted to seduce me. She persisted in this with the greatest persistence.

It happened that when I was in Jazā' Ibn 'Āmir,<sup>78</sup> a woman met me. She was covered up, veiled and wearing perfume, of fair complexion and clean—a woman of great beauty! She said to me: "Oh my lord, I wish to be with you in private and converse with you." My very entrails recoiled. I quickly set off fleeing from her, until I said: "Surely, I've escaped from her among the people." Then while I was in the Raṣīf,<sup>79</sup> behold she was standing beside me enticing me. Again I fled from her in haste until I reached the rope-makers' quarter. I said: "She has no further desire", and I slowed my pace. But behold, she was standing beside me enticing me. I fled from her in haste until I reached the quarter of the candle-makers. And behold, she was still standing beside me! Then I fled from her until I reached a spot east of the Qarawiyyīn Mosque. I said: "I'm delivered from her." Then behold, she was standing beside me. I fled from her until I reached the quarter of the copper-workers, and I said: "I've escaped from her." But behold, she was still standing beside me. I fled from her until I came to the candle-makers a second time, and I said: "I've escaped", but there she was beside me. I then fled from her until I reached the Qarawiyyīn Mosque and went inside. I said: "Now I've escaped." But when I came to the great chandelier (*al-thurayyā al-kubrā*), there she was standing alongside me.

A state came over me and I was on the point of crying out so people would gather around me and around her. But suddenly she was transformed and changed back into Sayyidī 'Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī. He said: "It's I who did this to you. I wanted to test you because I know how fond of women the *sharīfs* are. I've found you to be as I wish—praise be to God!" And he was delighted by this in the extreme.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that in the course of this book some instructive points from Sayyidī 'Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī's divine

<sup>78</sup> The text has *jazā'ir*; but see Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 638; *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names.

<sup>79</sup> Cigar, p. 237; and Le Tourneau, p. 315.

insights will be presented—God give us profit through him! And al-Dabbāgh said: ‘His death took place in the year 1126/1714.’

After Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī had returned to his country, I heard al-Dabbāgh say: ‘I was with Sayyidī °Abd Allāh today. He said this to me and I said that to him, and we did such-and-such.’—and other similar things. But during this time I used to go outside with him—God be pleased with him—and I was with him, whether coming or going, so that we were only apart for very brief moments. When I heard him talk like this, I said to him: (57) ‘Didn’t Sayyidī °Abd Allāh go back to his country?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘No distance separates the godly (*al-ṣāliḥūn*), even if their home countries are far apart. If a godly person in the Maghrib wants to speak with a godly person in the Sudan or in Baṣra<sup>80</sup> or somewhere else, you see him speaking with him as if he were speaking to someone right next to him. And if a third godly person wants to speak with the other two, he does so and the same is true for a fourth one. Thus you see a gathering of godly persons, each of them in a separate country, but they talk to one another like a group assembled in the same place.’

And he said: ‘When Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī died, I inherited the secrets (*asrār*) he possessed—praise be to God!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘One of the great people I met who’d reached the rank of Pivot (*quṭb*)—he was in fact one of the Pivots—was Sayyidī Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad. I happened to meet him one month before the eclipse of the sun. The way I met him was that he worked as a weaver and I went with my brother °Allāl to find someone to teach him the craft of weaving. I entered the workshop and began looking at the people working there. I found a particular man and came to an agreement with him.

When we finished our business and I was about to leave, a man I didn’t know called out to me. He said: “I’d like to talk to you.” So I went over to him, and he asked: “Who are you?” I replied: “A *sharīf*.” He said: “They’re good men, chaste and virtuous.” And he asked: “What’s your name?” “°Abd al-°Azīz”, I replied. He said: “I’m honored to meet you!” Then he asked: “Do you have a mother and a father?” “They’re both dead”, I replied. He said: “I’d like to know whether you have a wife and children.” I answered: “Yes, I do.” He asked: “And do you have any worldly means?” I replied:

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<sup>80</sup> Sudan: not the present-day country of Sudan but sub-Saharan Africa where Borno is located. As for Baṣra, that’s where Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm lives, with whom al-Dabbāgh communicates supernaturally at long distance, and he is the *qāḍī* of the Diwān al-ṣāliḥīn.

“No, I don’t.” Then he said: “Take these *mawzūnas*.” And behold, they amounted to thirty *mawzūnas*.

And this was how I came to know him. Some stories and wondrous things happened to me with him.’ Some of them will be recounted in this book—if God the Sublime is willing! And he said: ‘I remained with him in the love of God and His Prophet, until he passed away in the year 1129/1717.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the eclipse of the sun took place on the 29th of Muḥarram at the beginning of the year 1118/12 May 1706. Thus they were companions for a period of about twelve [lunar] years. And I asked our Shaykh—(58) God be pleased with him: ‘Which of them was greater, Sayyidī ‘Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī or Sayyidī Maṣṣūr?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Sayyidī ‘Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī, although each of them was a Pivot.’

He said: ‘When Sayyidī Maṣṣūr<sup>81</sup> died, I inherited what he’d possessed [spiritually]—praise be to God!’

Al-Dabbāgh said: ‘Another of those whom I met was Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj<sup>82</sup> and his region was near Tetuan, whereas Sayyidī Maṣṣūr was from Jabal Ḥabīb<sup>83</sup> in Faḥṣ.<sup>84</sup> The way I met him was that when our father died, our uncle took me and my brother to the workshop where they make skullcaps. Someone who worked there was a relative of Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj. But when Sayyidī Muḥammad came to the workshop to see his relative, he walked straight to me and sat down beside me and talked to me until we both had a perfect knowledge of one another. Wondrous stories and amazing miracles happened to me with him.’ Some of these will be recounted in this book—if God the Sublime is willing! ‘And my meeting him was before I met Sayyidī Maṣṣūr. I met him in the year 1112/1700-1. And his death occurred a few days after that of Sayyidī Maṣṣūr. When he died, I inherited from him [spiritually]—praise be to God!’

Now these are the persons whom he met in known meetings. The first among them was the shaykh of shaykhs, the Pivot of the knowers of God, the chief of the Friends and the godly, our lord al-Khaḍīr—peace be upon him! The second of them was our lord ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī, the custodian of the shrine of Sayyidī ‘Alī b. Ḥirzihim—God give us profit through him—and this

<sup>81</sup> On him see p. 727.

<sup>82</sup> On him see p. 728.

<sup>83</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* I, p. 290.

<sup>84</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names; south of Fez; cf. Jean-Léon l’Africain, *Description* I, p. 248, fn. (365).

was on the advice of our lord al-Khaḍir, as previously described. The third was Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī: ‘And my meeting with him was on the day following illumination.’ The fourth was Sayyidī Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad. And the fifth was Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that he had other encounters with a number of Friends and he inherited from them. They’ll be mentioned (59) in the course of this book—if God the Sublime is willing! Among them was the Support (*al-ghawth*) of the era, the knower of God of his day and age, Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh al-Miṣrī.<sup>85</sup>

I heard our Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: ‘The day I entered the Dīwān, Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh, and the other people of the Dīwān as well, only spoke of one thing that day. They admonished me and urged me to keep the secret concealed. And Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh ordered everyone who had a story dealing with this subject to recount it. Thus they recounted some two hundred stories.’ I heard eight of them from our Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

### THE FIRST STORY

The story of Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh, the Support (*al-ghawth*)—God be pleased with him. He said:

‘I had a disciple whom I loved very dearly. One day I was extolling the affair of the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and I said to him: “Oh my son, if it weren’t for the light of our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—no secret (*sirr*) from among the earth’s secrets would become manifest. If not for his light, none of the springs would gush up and none of the rivers would flow. It’s his light, oh my son, that’s diffused three times upon all the seeds in the month of March<sup>86</sup> and they then bear fruit through his blessing. If not for his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—they wouldn’t bear fruit.

Oh my child, the person with the least amount of faith views his faith as a mountain or something bigger [weighing] upon his body. And this is all the more true in the case of those with much faith. At

<sup>85</sup> Al-Miṣrī (the Egyptian): the story he relates takes place in Egypt. Al-Dabbāgh’s meeting with al-Miṣrī may well be only in the Dīwān, i.e. supernaturally. Another member of the Dīwān, Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm, lives in Baṣra but communicates directly with al-Dabbāgh in Fez (pp. 412-13). On the Dīwān al-ṣāliḥīn see Chapter Four.

<sup>86</sup> *shahr māris*: the month of March. On the Julian calendar being retained in the Maghrib for agricultural purposes see Cigar, pp. 247, fn. 3, under the year 1100/1688-89.

times the body grows weary bearing the faith and it wishes to be rid of it. Then the light of the Prophet of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is diffused over the body and becomes the body's helper in bearing the faith. The body then finds the faith pleasant and agreeable."<sup>87</sup>

But while I was extolling the Prophet to him and enumerating the blessings we've acquired from him, at a certain moment I was absent in the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! When the disciple saw what came over me, he said: "I beseech you by the rank of this noble Prophet. Bestow on me the secret (*sirr*)!" I wanted to refuse but I beheld the Prophet's awesome rank. So I granted his wish and bestowed the secret on him. Then it wasn't long before they bore witness against him and they killed him. That is to say, he was from among the Khūz<sup>88</sup> Arabs. He lived in the region of (60) al-Maḥalla<sup>89</sup> which is one of the administrative districts of Egypt. When he heard the secret from me, he went and gathered a group around him and began to tell them the secret. But their minds couldn't support it. So they drew up testimony against him based on what they heard him say, and they killed him.'

## THE SECOND STORY

One of them said: 'I had a disciple who served me for twelve years. I loved him very dearly and intended to have him marry my daughter.' And he said: 'I used to be absent every week for three days and sit on the shore of the sea. On this occasion my absence coincided with the Feast of the Immolation. I had six sons and three daughters and a servant. When I came back to the house, I found that he'd clothed them all and bought for them everything they required. I was extremely delighted by this. When I met him, he made a request of me and asked me to bestow the secret on him. And he was persistent in asking me for this. So I bestowed the secret on him, though I did it with reluctance. Only forty days went by and they drew up testimony against him. It was based on what they heard him say about the secrets that [human] minds can't support. Then they crucified him!'

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<sup>87</sup> Cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 113, ll. 7-17; for a list of all the quotations from the *Ibrīz* found in al-Ḥājj 'Umar's *Rimāḥ* cf. Radtke, 'Sources'.

<sup>88</sup> Perhaps a copyist's error.

<sup>89</sup> EI, s.v. al-Maḥalla al-kubrā.

## THE THIRD STORY

One of them said: 'I had a disciple who served me for nine years. I loved him very dearly because of his service and the excellence of his companionship, and because he was from our quarter of the city and one of our neighbors. And I had a wife who was frequently afflicted with illness. The disciple had a pretty wife and would bring her to our house and she'd do the work my wife was unable to do. Both he and his wife were of service, and I loved him very dearly because of this.

One day while I was standing in a particular place, behold he came with a little daughter of his who had a Qur'ān in her hand. Before I knew it the girl fell at my feet, holding the Qur'ān in her hands. I recoiled, taking a few steps backward. Then I said: "Oh So-and-so, what is it you want? This is an imposing entreaty and a powerful appeal." He said: "Oh Sayyidī, I want you to bestow the secret on me." I replied to him: "Oh So-and-so, you won't be able to sustain it. The secret is an awesome matter and a great concern. No one can sustain it unless God has given him the strength to do so. While two-thirds of mankind exclaim to the bearer of the secret: 'Bravo!', should he divulge it, he'll be destroyed and perish." But he said: "Oh Sayyidī, bestow the secret on me! I can support it!" I considered his service and the service of his wife, as well as our acquaintance with one another and the entreaty he'd made, and I said to him: "Alright, I'll (61) bestow the secret on you."

Our Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'But he received the secret without a body (*dhāt*).<sup>90</sup> And whoever receives the secret without a body—it brings about his destruction.' I asked: 'What does body refer to [in this case]?' He replied: 'The body of the shaykh and its secrets, and this is only transmitted to a disciple after the death of the shaykh.' And he said: 'The Friend is able to bestow the secret, but only God the Sublime can bestow the body.'

[He continued:] 'So he received the secret and departed. He was absent from the shaykh for three days. The three days hadn't quite elapsed when he began to talk about his shaykh. Someone came and informed the shaykh. The person said: "So-and-so, your disciple, is talking about you." The shaykh then feigned ignorance of him. Affliction descended over the disciple, and his affair persisted in ignorance and darkness until a caravan arrived. Then he set off with the caravan and he travelled on the sea and he was taken prisoner.

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<sup>90</sup> See Appendix, pp. 926-27.



After that he became a Christian. God protect us from such an eventuality!

This misfortune came over him because he was impatient to possess the secret before the proper time. Thus he was punished by being deprived of Islam. We ask God for protection from this!

#### THE FOURTH STORY

One of them said: 'I and another man were brothers in God—He is mighty and glorious! We decided to travel about in the land and seek a Friend of God the Sublime who'd take us by the hand and unite us with God—He is exalted! We continued travelling until God brought us together with one of His Friends. We found him employed in preparing broth made with bread (*tharīd*). So one of us then sat and tended the fire, while the other weighed out the broth for people. The shaykh saw to the preparation. And we went on doing this for a long time. But eventually the shaykh's appointed hour was at hand. On one occasion he even lost consciousness.

My brother in God came to him and said: "Oh Sayyidī Shaykh, I want you to bestow the secret on me." The shaykh replied—God be pleased with him: "But you aren't able to support it yet." My brother said to him: "Oh Sayyidī, you must bestow the secret on me!" The shaykh turned to me and said: "Do you consent to this?" I replied: "Oh Sayyidī, if this is to your liking, I consent." My brother said: "Consent and God the Sublime will give you recompense from His bounty." I consented and my brother in God received the secret. The shaykh hung on another two days and then he died.

My brother departed for his country, but I remained and worked in the shaykh's shop. Everything I earned (62) I spent on the shaykh's household, for he had a wife, three daughters and a son. I remained in the shop working for them for twelve years. I did this out of love that was in no way deficient. When this period had elapsed, the shaykh's daughters married and each of them went to her own house. And the shaykh's son travelled to a region of the Maghrib, and the brother of the shaykh married the latter's wife. Now I didn't find anyone who desired a close bond of affection. I felt dejected and I resolved to travel back to my country. I prepared my provisions and sold everything I owned.

All that remained was to visit the shaykh's grave—God be pleased with him! I set out for his grave to pay my respects, and it was located in a fearful place far from the inhabited area. When I'd made my visit and was about to depart, my heart addressed me: "Alas! Are

you leaving and will you never again see the shaykh's grave?" Longing for the shaykh and an intense melancholy gripped me. So I went back and remained at his grave a while longer. When I was about to depart, melancholy gripped me again like the first time. So I went back once more and remained at the grave until noon. Then I intended to depart but the same thing happened to me again.

Thus I stayed on until nightfall. All along I wept out of love for the shaykh and because of missing him in view of my intention to separate from him. I spent the night at his grave and this state [I was in] went on increasing until dawn arrived. Now our lord al-Khaḍir came to me—peace be upon him! He implanted in me the *dhikr* and God gave me illumination. Then I set out for my country in a state of contentment.

And I passed by the town of my brother which was on my way. When I entered the town, I found the people gathering firewood with the intention of burning a man at the stake. I went to see who the man was and behold, it was my brother in God—He is mighty and glorious! I said to the group who were gathering firewood: "What's this man's sin?" They replied: "He was saying such-and-such." And this was one of God the Sublime's secrets that he'd divulged. They heard this from him and their minds couldn't support it. They sought a *fatwā* from the religious scholars and the latter condemned him to be burned at the stake.

I approached my brother and though I knew him, he didn't recognize me because of the severe distress he'd undergone. I said to him: "Why do these people wish to kill you and burn you at the stake?" He replied: "They heard me say such-and-such. But everything I said to them is true." I asked: "And did you say anything besides this?" He replied: "That's all I said."

I turned to the group of people and told them: "Don't do anything to him until I return from the sultan. I'll go and speak to the sultan and tell him that this man shouldn't be killed. You must be patient until I return from the sultan. Whoever harms him will have to fear for himself. I have hopes that once I've spoken (63) to the sultan about the man's case, he'll repeal his decision." The group of people replied: "We'll be patient until you return."

I then set out for the sultan. When I came before him, the religious scholars were with him and they were discussing my brother's case and urging him to have my brother executed. I said: "Oh sultan, God grant you a mighty victory and guide you and give you success in what He approves and what pleases Him! Three hundred and sixty-six angels watch over the body of each and every one of Adam's

offspring. When this number of angels who occupy the body come forth after the body's execution, their only concern is to invoke a curse on the one who destroyed the body and made them come forth unjustly. And the prayers of angels are answered. This their invocation is to be feared, oh sovereign!

Likewise, there are seven noble guardian scribes who attend upon the body, and when the body is destroyed unjustly, their only task is to transfer all the bad deeds from the page of the dead man and they transfer them from his page and place them on the page of the murderer. And whatever good deeds the murderer did, they transfer from his page and place them on the page of the dead man. This is their task until the murderer dies. Then their task becomes one of recollection (*dhikr*) and they recollect whatever bad deeds the murderer did. The recollection of angels is like the rain and everything they recollect descends on him. If they recall someone for wickedness, wickedness descends on him, and if they recall someone for good, good descends on him. And now they persist in recalling the murdered person for good and good descends on him, whereas they persist in recalling the murderer for evil and evil descends on him. Doesn't this cause you apprehension, oh sovereign?"

The sovereign replied: "It was the religious scholars who condemned him to death." I said: "But they've been hasty in condemning him to death. It was their duty to examine both his words and his intention. If his words require his death, one must then inquire about his intention. If his intention was sound, he isn't to be put to death. Therefore send for the man so he may be present, and question him about his intention."

The religious scholars said—God be pleased with them: "What he says is true and correct. We must do this." They then sent for the man and questioned him about his intention. They found his intention was sound and that he didn't deserve to be put to death because of it. So they set him free.'

(64) I asked our Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'And what did the man do after he was released?' He replied: 'His brother, who had set him free, dispossessed him and made him into an ordinary person. He removed all of the secret that the shaykh had bestowed on him.'

And I asked: 'Since their death, what's the state of the persons in the first and the second stories?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'They both died as Friends of God. As for the person in the third story, however, he died an unbeliever. We beseech God for protection from this!'

## THE FIFTH STORY

One of them said: 'I had a disciple who attended upon me for twelve years and he possessed generosity and munificence. He'd spent on me, and on his brethren the *faqīrs*,<sup>91</sup> money in excess of a *qinṭār*.<sup>92</sup> And I had a brother [in God] who was in the sultan's service. One day the sultan became angry with my brother and imposed on him a large sum he couldn't pay. For my part, I was venerated among the people and in the hearts of the common folk. So the Makhzan<sup>93</sup> wasn't able to hurt me. But the disciple then took advantage of the situation. He said: "Oh Sayyidi Shaykh, you must bestow the secret on me. Otherwise, give me back the whole of the large sum of money I spent on you and the *faqīrs*. If not, I'll summon you before the Makhzan. Choose for yourself one of these three things." I replied: "Oh my son, hold God in fear! God the Sublime will bestow the secret on you as you wish and beyond what you imagine. If you doubt my words, I'll swear to you by God and take an oath to this effect."

My words only increased his displeasure and provoked him to do me harm. "By God", he said, "I won't leave you alone until you give me back all the money I spent on you. Otherwise, I'll summon you before the Makhzan." And if the Makhzan found some way to harm me, they wouldn't let me escape. He then added more of the same to what he'd already said and went on repeating it to me. So I removed what I was wearing on my head and prayed that he be given the secret. And God bestowed the secret on him.

Then only a few days elapsed before he beheld something that God veils from the minds of His bondsmen because their minds can't sustain it. And he began to speak about it to the people. When they heard this from him, they drew up proof against him and straightway they killed him. If he'd been patient until he received the secret of the body (*dhāt*) by means of which Friendship's secret persists, God the Sublime would have given him success and he wouldn't have divulged anything of Friendship's secrets. But because he was hasty, God the Sublime punished him.'

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<sup>91</sup> The term *faqīr* almost always refers to a member of a Sufi order; cf. Cigar, Glossary.

<sup>92</sup> A *qinṭār*=one thousand *mithqāls*; cf. Cigar, p. 271.

<sup>93</sup> Makhzan: originally the term designated the treasury but it eventually came to mean the government and the governmental administration; cf. EI s.v.

(65) Then I asked our Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘And in what state did this person die?’” He replied: ‘He died as a Friend of God.’ I praised God on his behalf.

As for the secrets that caused these persons to die, we’ve heard them from our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—but we haven’t recorded them here because these are secrets that mustn’t be spoken. God the Sublime give us success in what He approves and what pleases Him, through the blessings of our Shaykh and through his pure lineage—amen! We’ll confine ourself to this number of stories so as not to become tedious. God alone gives success!

### (69) SECTION THREE

Some of the miracles that took place at the hand of the Shaykh—  
God be pleased with him!

Know that our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—is extraordinary and his circumstances are wondrous in every respect. Such a person has no need of the miraculous because his every aspect is a miracle. He deals with the sciences that eminent religious scholars are unable to deal with and what he has to say about these accords with reason (*ma<sup>c</sup>qūl*), as well as tradition (*manqūl*)—this despite his being formally unschooled (*ummī*) and not having learned the noble Qur’ān by heart, not to speak of the fact that he hadn’t undertaken any study of the religious sciences. Indeed, he was never seen at an assembly of learning, neither in his youth nor in his mature years. But let’s begin with the miracle that surpasses all others, which is integrity and soundness in doctrinal belief.

When God caused me to meet al-Dabbāgh, I questioned him about his doctrinal belief concerning God’s Oneness (*tawhīd*). He set forth for me the doctrine of the People of the Sunna and the Community (*ahl al-sunna wa’l-jamā<sup>c</sup>a*),<sup>94</sup> and he didn’t depart from this in any way. Indeed, one time he said to me: ‘No one receives illumination unless he’s adhered to the doctrine of the People of the Sunna and the Community, and God has no Friend who adheres to doctrinal belief other than theirs. But if he’d adhered to another doctrine before illumination, he must then repent after illumination and return to the doctrines of the People of the Sunna.’ I would add that this is

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<sup>94</sup> On the history and development of this term cf. EI, s.v. Djamā<sup>c</sup>a.

the same as Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī<sup>95</sup> says in his commentary to al-Subkī's *Jam' al-jawāmi'*.<sup>96</sup>

I constantly heard al-Dabbāgh lauding the People of the Sunna and heaping praise on them. He would say: 'I love them with an immense love.' And he beseeched God the Sublime that whenever He should take him unto Himself to see to it that he was adhering to their doctrine.

After that I put to him some of the specious arguments of the heretics and he fully understood their speciousness and he explained them with the best of accounts, refuting them by way of direct vision and witnessing. Moreover, were you to hear him regarding God's Lordliness (*rubūbiyya*) and the secret of divinity (*sirr al-ulūhiyya*), why he gives such answers as no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and such as have never occurred to our minds despite our intense engagement with reason (*ma'qūl*) and tradition (*manqūl*)! Indeed, whoever has received success from God (70) and associated with al-Dabbāgh in this topic, rambling with him among the answers to the specious arguments of the heretics, will acquire a faculty and obtain an aptitude to refute the specious arguments of [all] seventy-two religious sects.

Referring to the clairvoyance and direct vision that God gave him through illumination, he once said to me: 'We only believe in what we've seen. Does anyone believe in what he can't see? Doubt is only removed by means of sight.'

Then I asked him about the *ḥadīths* that deal with the divine attributes: 'What must one do, consign their meaning to God (*tafwīd*), which was the way of the forefathers, or make use of interpretation (*ta'wīl*), which is what later generations have done?'

He replied: 'One must consign their meaning to God. The matter of God's Lordliness is immense. God's bondsmen don't realize its extent and are incapable of grasping anything of its essence. If people in the here and now wish to comprehend the reality of what they've heard about the blessings enjoyed by the inhabitants of Paradise it's impossible for them. The grapes [of Paradise] aren't like [earthly] grapes, and the dates aren't like [earthly] dates, and the gold isn't like gold. If God gives illumination to His bondsman and he looks at the gold of the people of Paradise and gold in the here and now, and the grapes of Paradise and grapes in the here and now, he'll find their real meanings are very different and that all they have in common is their names. And the same is true of the people of the

<sup>95</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 129, I; died 794/1392.

<sup>96</sup> See here p. xiii, ftn. 21.

second layer of earth with regard to the blessings of the people of the first layer of earth. Even if honey, clarified butter, milk and bread, and suchlike were designated for them with the names of what they eat, they wouldn't attain a knowledge of honey and the other foods mentioned because these things are lacking in the second layer of earth. If this is the case when comparing one contingent thing with another, how can you compare the Eternal—He is sublime—with what's contingent?

Thus when God's bondsmen hear some of the *ḥadīths* about the divine attributes, they must simply declare that God transcends the external and the transient, and consign the meaning to God—He is mighty and glorious!

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that consigning the meaning to God (*tafwīd*) was the doctrinal position of Mālik,<sup>97</sup> Sufyān b. °Uyayna,<sup>98</sup> Sufyān (71) al-Thawrī,<sup>99</sup> Ḥammād b. Zayd<sup>100</sup> and Ḥammād b. Salama,<sup>101</sup> Shu°ba<sup>102</sup> and Sharīk,<sup>103</sup> Abū °Awāna,<sup>104</sup> Rabī°a,<sup>105</sup> al-Awzā°ī,<sup>106</sup> Abū Ḥanīfa,<sup>107</sup> al-Shāfi°ī<sup>108</sup> and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal,<sup>109</sup> al-Walīd b. Muslim,<sup>110</sup> al-Bukhārī<sup>111</sup> and al-Tirmidhī,<sup>112</sup> Ibn al-Mubārak,<sup>113</sup> Ibn Abī Ḥātim<sup>114</sup> and Yūnus b. °Abd al-A°lā.<sup>115</sup> And this was the doctrinal position of the people of the [first] three generations who were in fact the best generations, such that Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Shaybānī,<sup>116</sup> the disciple of Abū Ḥanīfa, says: 'All the jurists (*fuqahā°*), from East to (72) West, are in agreement about belief in the Qur°ān and the *ḥadīths* that trustworthy witnesses have passed down from the Prophet—God's blessings and

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- 97 GAS I, p. 457; died 179/795.  
 98 GAS I, p. 96; died 196/811.  
 99 GAS I, p. 518; died 161/778.  
 100 Cf. EI, Supplement; died 179/795.  
 101 ThG II, p. 376; died 167/784.  
 102 GAS I, p. 92; died 160/776.  
 103 GAS I, p. 520; died 187/803.  
 104 GAS I, p. 174; died 316/928.  
 105 GAS I, p. 406; died 136/753.  
 106 GAS I, p. 516; died 157/774.  
 107 GAS I, p. 409; died 150/767.  
 108 GAS I, pp. 484 f.; died 204/820.  
 109 GAS I, pp. 502 f.; died 241/855.  
 110 GAS I, p. 293; died 195/810.  
 111 GAS I, p. 115; died 256/870.  
 112 GAS I, p. 154; died 279/892.  
 113 GAS I, p. 95; died 181/797.  
 114 GAS I, p. 178; died 327/938.  
 115 GAS II, p. 637; died 264/877-8.  
 116 GAS I, p. 421; died 189/805.

peace be upon him—concerning the attributes of the Lord which aren't to be understood anthropomorphically (*tashbīh*) or through interpretation (*tafsīr*).'

And Imām al-Ḥaramayn<sup>117</sup> says in *al-Risāla al-nizāmiyya*: 'Regarding these external signs (*ẓawāhir*), the procedures of the religious scholars have been different. The opinion of some was to apply interpretation (*tafsīr*), and this was imposed on verses of the Qur'ān and whatever were sound Traditions. But the practice of the early imams (*a'immat al-salaf*) was to refrain from interpretation and to consign the true meaning of these scriptures to God—He is mighty and glorious!

What we approve of as opinion and what we adopt as doctrine in professing God is in conformity with the early imams, for the cogent reason that the consensus of the Muslim community is a proof, and indeed if interpretation (*ta'wīl*) of the external signs was a necessary duty, their efforts at interpretation would have been greater than their efforts at working out the detailed application of the *sharī'a*. Thus, if during the age of the Companions and the Followers interpretation was shunned, this is the method to be followed.'<sup>118</sup>

The *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar<sup>119</sup> says: 'The transmission from the people of the third generation has precedence, and they were the jurists of the garrison cities, people such as al-Thawrī<sup>120</sup> and al-Awzā'ī,<sup>121</sup> and Mālik<sup>122</sup> and Layth,<sup>123</sup> and those who were their contemporaries, as well as those who transmitted from them what goes back to the imams. So how can one not trust what the people of the [first] three generations agreed upon, since they were the best generations in attesting the Bearer of the *sharī'a*—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

(73) By his phrase 'the transmission [from the people of the third generation] has precedence', he's referring to what we summarized

<sup>117</sup> Al-Juwaynī; died 478/1085.

<sup>118</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 129, II; = *ʿAqīda nizāmiyya*, p. 23, l. 6 to p. 24, l. 4/translation by Klopfer, pp. 50 f.; text is freely adapted here; 'Ibrīziana' provides a list of the sources cited by al-Lamaṭī in the *Ibrīz*.

<sup>119</sup> Ibn Ḥajar al-ʿAsqalānī, died 852/1449; 'Ibrīziana', p. 129, III. The quotation that follows should be from the *Faṭḥ al-bārī fī sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, al-Lamaṭī's primary source for *ḥadīths*, but it couldn't be found in the text. Why a number of his citations from the *Faṭḥ* couldn't be identified remains a mystery. Did al-Lamaṭī have before him a version of the work different from the MSS used for the printed edition?

<sup>120</sup> See fn. 99 above.

<sup>121</sup> See fn. 106 above.

<sup>122</sup> See fn. 97 above.

<sup>123</sup> GAS I, p. 520; died 175/791.



from his words in connection with naming the people mentioned above. Thus the doctrinal belief of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—is the very doctrine of the people of the [first] three generations. And this is the miracle beyond which there's no greater miracle. The *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar says: 'Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Munayyir<sup>124</sup> said: "It's inconceivable that soundness of belief isn't a miracle, though unlike other supernatural events that are sometimes a blessing and sometimes a trial."<sup>125</sup>

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Now having heard these words, know that what we witnessed of the Shaykh's miracles—God be pleased with him—and of his unveilings (*kushūfāt*) is an immense subject, which it's impossible for us to delve into exhaustively. But let's mention some part of it.

One [example] is that a son of mine died—toward the beginning of my acquaintance with the Shaykh. The boy's mother was grieved on his account. Indeed, another son had died before this one. I attempted to console her, telling her: 'I heard Sayyidī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh, the [spiritual] master of al-Makhfiyya, say: "When I look at the young boys and I look at the afflictions that are going to arrive, I feel pity for them. Whoever among them dies has escaped all this." And now your son has died.' I was saying things like this to console her and give her solace. The following morning I met our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and he said: 'Yesterday you said such-and-such to your wife.' He mentioned the very words I quoted from Sayyidī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh. I realized he'd revealed to me [through clairvoyance] what happened in the house.

Another one is that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was eating cloves for an ailment in his chest and a pleasant aroma began to emanate from him, an aroma of cloves. I could smell this quite strongly on him when I was with him during the day. When he exhaled, an aroma of cloves came forth with his noble breath. Then I began to perceive this same aroma when I was at home during the night. The doors were shut and he was in his house in Ra's al-Jinān<sup>126</sup> and I live in Bi'r Naqr.<sup>127</sup> The aroma began to waft over us in the room, one whiff after another, and I woke up because of this and informed my wife of it. She loved the Shaykh very dearly and likewise the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—loved her very

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<sup>124</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXXI; GAL I, p. 416; died 683/1284; and see here p. 790, fn. 74.

<sup>125</sup> Not found in the *Faṭḥ*.

<sup>126</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 119.

<sup>127</sup> The text has *bkr nqr*; not in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

dearly. Thereafter the matter of the aroma persisted with us for a long time, lasting for several days. Then I said to him—God be pleased with him: (74) ‘Your aroma is with us at night and we can smell it very clearly. Have you been with us?’ He replied: ‘Yes, I have.’ I said to him by way of joking: ‘Oh Sayyidī, I’ll follow the aroma and catch hold of you.’ And he replied with humor: ‘Then I’ll move to a different corner of the room.’ Another time I mentioned the matter of the aroma to him and he replied: ‘That’s the [mere] sense of smell. But where’s the passion?’

On another occasion he said to me: ‘I never leave you night or day.’ And another time he said: ‘Demand a reckoning from me before God—He is mighty and glorious—if I don’t watch over you five hundred times in one hour.’

And one time I said to him: ‘Oh Sayyidī, I saw in a dream my body and your body in a single garment.’ He replied: ‘That was a true dream.’ He indicated that he never left me night or day. And one time he said to me: ‘I’ll come to you this night. Be alert!’ When it was the final sixth of the night and I was between sleep and waking, he came to me—God be pleased with him! When he drew near me, I took his noble hand and held on to it and I followed after him. I wanted to kiss his hand. When I kissed it and I kissed his generous head, he disappeared from me.

Another one is that the sultan—God give him victory—wrote his letter and sent it to me with two of his companions. His order was that I go to Miknāsa to become prayer leader in the al-Riyāḍ Mosque.<sup>128</sup> Then God knows the grief I suffered [at the thought of leaving my Shaykh]. When he heard this, he said to me: ‘Don’t be afraid. Should you have to move to Miknāsa, we’d move with you. But no harm will come to you. What they seek from you won’t come to pass.’ I then went with the two men to Miknāsa and God settled the matter happily. Everything turned out as the Shaykh had said—God be pleased with him! I then returned to my home in Fez. When my father-in-law, the jurist Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ‘Umar, heard about this, he wrote to me, saying: ‘You’ve come from Miknāsa but you didn’t meet with the sultan—God give him victory—and you didn’t take leave of him. Nor do you know what may befall after your arrival. The right thing to do is to go back to Miknāsa and meet with the sultan—God give him victory! Show him you’re pleased to accept the post of prayer leader in the mosque in question. Don’t do anything (75) but this!’ I took his letter to the Shaykh—God be

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<sup>128</sup> Apparently the mosque of Madīnat al-Riyāḍ in Miknās (cf. EI s.v.).

pleased with him—and he said to me: ‘Stay in your home and fear no harm.’ And matters turned out as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! This was indeed a wondrous miracle. Were I to explain [further] the matter of this story, the wondrousness I’ve indicated would become clear. Some of our companions among the courtiers in Miknāsa were saying: ‘We’ve seen nothing more wondrous than what you did! The sultan—God give him victory—sent you his letter and in it he pressed you urgently. He sent two of his companions and they brought you to him. But then you refused to meet him. You returned to Fez and showed no concern. This is really an astonishing matter!’ And all of this was due to the blessing of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

Another one is that my wife became pregnant and he said: ‘It’s a male.’ When she was in her ninth month—at the beginning of which she normally gave birth—she began to have pains. We were sure these were the birth pangs, but the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The pains you see are from an ailment that’s occurred. The birth is still some way off.’ And it was just as he said—God be pleased with him!

And another one is that I met the jurist Sayyidī Muḥammad Mayyāra<sup>129</sup> and he bestowed on the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—four *mawzūnas*. The Shaykh said to me afterwards: ‘Really, Sayyidī Muḥammad Mayyāra is something great. He put his hand in his pocket and took out some *mawzūnas*. But he didn’t like them and he put them back. Then he took out some that he did like and gave them to us.’ I met Sayyidī Muḥammad Mayyāra and I told him what the Shaykh said. He replied: ‘What he said is true. The *mawzūnas* that came forth were bad, so I put them back and gave him the good ones.’

And I was speaking with the same jurist and mention was made of a man whom the jurist believed was endowed with goodness. At that I indicated what I knew about him myself. [Later] the Shaykh said: ‘When you recounted what you recounted about the man, the jurist’s very intestines trembled in his abdomen because of the strength of his good intentions toward the man.’ Then I met the jurist in question and told him what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! The jurist replied: ‘By God, it’s true! The matter was just as he said.’

And another one is that the Shaykh’s son, Sayyidī Idrīs—God make him prosper and thrive—fell ill with a dangerous illness. His mother was greatly distressed by this. One day after sunset I went in

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<sup>129</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* III, p. 353; died 1144/1731.

to see the boy and behold, he couldn't speak due to the overwhelming force of the illness. His condition made me sad. (76) When we came outside, however, the Shaykh said to me: 'He won't die from this illness. He'll be restored to health.' And it turned out as he said—God be pleased with him!

The same thing also happened to his daughter Sayyida Fāṭima—God make her prosper! She fell ill, and the illness dragged on. The Shaykh then said to me: 'She won't die from this. She'll be restored to health.' And it turned out as he said—God be pleased with him!

Likewise the son of our companion Sayyidī al-Ḥājj Muḥammad b. °Alī b. °Abd al-°Azīz b. °Alī al-Murābiṭī al-Sijilmāsī<sup>130</sup> became ill and the father, as he informed me himself, fell into despair because of it. I mentioned the matter to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—when we came out of the al-Andalus Mosque<sup>131</sup> after the Friday prayers and were heading toward the Bāb al-Futūḥ. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said about the boy: 'He won't be harmed. His mother doesn't want him to die. If he died, his mother would suffer unbearable grief. He isn't going to die.' And the matter turned out as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him!

These people are all still alive at the present time, that is to say the 22nd of Rabī° al-Awwal in the year 1130/23 February 1718.

And another one is that we went to visit the shrine of the Pivot Mawlāy °Abd al-Salām b. Mashīsh<sup>132</sup>—God give us profit through him, amen! We reached his shrine at the hour of the noonday prayers. We thought the Shaykh would lead us in prayer here—God be pleased with him—but behold, he said: 'Don't unpack the animals. Wait for us to return from visiting the shaykh's shrine.' I ascended with him to the shaykh °Abd al-Salām's tomb and we paid our respects to him. Then he said to me: 'How was your visit and your prayers?' I replied: 'My prayers during the visit have been exclusively on your behalf. Since I sat down for this visit, I've been invoking blessings for you. I haven't prayed for my sake, let alone for the sake of anyone else.' And the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'It's the same with me. My visit has been wholly for your sake and I haven't prayed for anyone but you.' I was immensely delighted by this (77) and gave praise to God.

Then we came down from the mountain and the Shaykh ordered us to set out for the city of Tetuan. I said: 'Oh Sayyidī, the city is far

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<sup>130</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index; and pp. 48 ff.

<sup>132</sup> On him cf. Nwyia, *Naissance*, p. 33; and see here first part of Chapter VII. His shrine is located in the mountains to the east of Tetuan.

away and we won't be able to reach it today. But your order is to be obeyed!' He urged us on and we knew he only ordered what was right. So we mounted our riding animals and we didn't stop travelling until dawn. Then we entered the city of Tetuan and the very moment we entered, the sky discharged its sieves. The rains that fell were overwhelming and continued for two days. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—took me up onto the roof of the house we were staying in, and the rain was pouring down. He said: 'Do you see these torrential rains?' I replied: 'Indeed, I do, oh Sayyidī!' He said: 'This is why I led you on at night. When I reached the shrine of Mawlāy 'Abd al-Salām, I saw the rains. What do you think would have happened if these rains had overtaken us on those steep slopes, and we had nothing with us to eat and nothing to feed our mounts—and the rains then continued?' I replied: 'Every conceivable hardship would have afflicted us—if we managed to escape death!' Then I kissed his noble hand and said: 'God reward you for the good you've done us!'

When after two days we departed from Tetuan, we came forth and the rain was falling at its heaviest. We said: 'Oh Sayyidī, we escaped from the rains and now we're about to return to them.' But he didn't answer us. So we went forth and we wanted to buy some barley as feed for our riding animals but he wouldn't allow it. Thus we went forth and the rain was at its heaviest. We'd only travelled one or two miles when the clouds dispersed and the winds grew calm and the sun appeared. The weather became fine and conditions were moderate. We were amazed by this. When it was mid-afternoon, we said: 'Oh Sayyidī, where is something for the mounts to eat?' He asked people where a settlement was and they replied: 'Far away. You won't reach it until the middle of the night.' He was silent and he began to move on with us. We heeded and were obedient. When the sun went down, he said: 'Turn to the right!' We quit the road and swerved to the right. We'd only proceeded a short way when we came upon some threshing floors with unthreshed grain and a spring of water nearby. He said: 'Halt here, for God has provided the riding animals with something to eat.' The Shaykh then ordered us to take [fodder] from the threshing floor and we did so and fed the animals. We spent a most pleasant evening there and when it was the hour of the evening prayer or thereabouts, the owner of the threshing floor arrived. He was very delighted to see us (78) and the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—gave him more than the value of what the riding animals had eaten. The man was delighted and pleased with

this. He spent the night with us. He ate of our food and it was as if he were one of us.

The same thing happened to us another time before we reached the shaykh °Abd al-Salām's shrine. When we'd crossed the pass of Banū Zakkār<sup>133</sup> and the hour of afternoon prayer had passed and the people who'd crossed the pass before us had halted, we said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, the people who crossed before us have halted.' He replied: 'Move on!' We said: 'Oh Sayyidī, how can we move on when we don't know the way and there's no one with us who knows the way?' He said: 'Move on!' We then set out and left the other people behind. And we had no guide with us. But God—He is sublime and exalted—showed us the way through inspiration until we came to a spring of water and nearby it a threshing floor with grain that had been threshed. The owner met us and gave us directions on where to alight. We spent a most pleasant night there. And our riding animals spent the night with straw to eat, whereas the riding animals of those who'd come through the pass before us spent the night without straw. During this noble visit we heard knowledge about higher realities and subtleties from the Shaykh, and we've recorded a great part of that in the present book.

And when he talked to you about places and locations—if you didn't know him—you'd think he'd travelled to the place he informed you about and that he'd beheld it and seen it with his own eyes. But this was simply his true clairvoyance. How many times he journeyed to distant places without a guide and yet during his journey he proceeded along penetrating roads which most people didn't know! One day he told the jurist Sayyidī °Alī b. °Abd Allāh al-Ṣabbāghī<sup>134</sup>—God have mercy on him—who resided in Ṣabbāghāt,<sup>135</sup> four halting-stations from the city of Fez: 'I rode with a group of people on horses until we came to a place'—he mentioned its name and described it—'and then I left the others there and went in to see your spiritual guide (*murshid*).' He began to describe the guide to him and to describe his house. And it was as if the house stood before his eyes. Moreover, he only mentioned riding horses to him to conceal his clairvoyance. Sayyidī °Alī—God have mercy on him—said to us: 'He has given an eye-witness description with nothing left out and nothing added.' The Shaykh then said to him: 'In the place where you tether the horses is located the grave of one

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<sup>133</sup> Cf. Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description* I, p. 269; located to the north-west of Fez.

<sup>134</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>135</sup> Unidentified.

of the great Friends. Don't continue to tether the horses there!' When they investigated this, they found it was as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! They then made the place into a shrine.

I heard the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—say about this Friend: 'He's one of our Fathers.' That is to say he was a Support (*ghawth*). And he said this to me openly.

(79) I was sitting with the Shaykh one day, when a man from the people of Zā came to him. Zā is a known region.<sup>136</sup> The Shaykh said: 'Where are you from?' The man replied: 'From the people of Zā.' The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—proceeded to describe the country for him and mentioned certain localities and distinguishing features. The man confirmed what the Shaykh said and thought he'd visited the place. When the man got up and left, the Shaykh turned to me and said: 'People love clairvoyance but it entails great harm for the Friend, as well as for the person who desires it from him. As for the harm to the Friend, this is because it involves coming down from witnessing the True (*ḥaqq*) to witnessing the created (*khalq*), and this is a descent from the highest summit. As for the harm to one who seeks clairvoyance from the Friend, this is because a person only seeks clairvoyance and a miracle from the Friend if his love for the Friend is in a wavering state. If the Friend complies with his wish, he confirms him in his state and leaves him in his ignorance.' An explanation of these two matters will be given in this book—if God is willing!

And another of these is that one of the *sharīfs* was reading something to me from the subtle sciences (*al-ʿulūm al-daqīqa*) and I'd explain it for him according to my ability. He was delighted with this and said: 'We haven't found anyone among the jurists who's given us this explanation you've given.' And while I was explaining the book to him, behold the author referred to a great matter which contained one of God's secrets—He is exalted! The *sharīf* asked me: 'What's the meaning of this passage?' I replied: 'I don't know', for I was afraid to divulge the secret. But the *sharīf* wouldn't stop inquiring. So I said to him: 'I'll only explain it to you if you swear oaths and enter covenants not to talk about what you hear, neither with a friend nor with a stranger.' This he swore to me, and I explained to him the intended meaning and gave him answers to all the difficulties that occurred so the matter appeared as clear as the sun. The *sharīf* was absolutely delighted, and I said to him: 'If during your life you should one day meet our Shaykh the Imam—

<sup>136</sup> The region takes its name from a river that rises in the Atlas and flows out into the desert; Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description* II, p. 546.

God be pleased with him—and discussion arises concerning this matter and he wishes to explain it for you, see that you feign ignorance and appear as if it hadn't reached your ears or been brought to your attention.' This as well he swore to me. Later that day I happened to meet our lord the Shaykh. The first thing he did was say (80) to me: 'You spoke to the *sharīf* So-and-so about this and that.' And he mentioned the particular matter. I said to him: 'Yes, oh Sayyidī. But I had only good intentions.' I then began to scrutinize his attitude and behold, it was as [mild as] milk—praise be to God!

His unveilings on the basis of clairvoyance (*kushūfāt*)—God be pleased with him—can't be confined within limits. Anyone who wishes to collect his miracles would need a separate composition, even though everything in this book is a miracle.

Among his miracles—God be pleased with him—was the effect his words had on people's hearts. One day a jurist came to him and said: 'Oh Sayyidī, pray to God on my behalf that doubts (*wasāwis*) be eliminated from my heart.' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Doubt only occurs through ignorance of the road. A person who sets out for a city but is ignorant of the road leading to it is afflicted with different stray thoughts. His thought says to him: "The road is this way", and he follows it. Then another thought says to him: "But no, the road is this way!" He remains bewildered and doesn't know where he's going. The one who knows the road proceeds on his way and his heart is secure from doubt. Now the road of this world and the world to come is God the Sublime. He who knows this gains the two goods, that of this world and of the world to come. God endows him with an agreeable life. He who's ignorant of this experiences the opposite.' When I heard these words, God had mercy on me through them—He is mighty and glorious! My mind became such that whenever it attended to a need other than Him—He is exalted—an attraction drew it away from the other and directed it back to God—He is mighty and glorious! We ask God for completeness in this.

And I heard him say: 'When the true believers sleep, they sleep in God and when they wake, they are awake in God.' When I heard these words from him, their meaning settled in my heart—praise be to God! Now when I sleep, God the Sublime is in my heart.

And I heard him say: 'Whenever the bondsman's mind departs with something other than God, it becomes cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious! Now among the people there's the person who returns to God—He is mighty and glorious—after one hour, and there's the person who returns after two hours. Then there's someone



who returns in less time, and someone else who returns later. So let the bondsman take stock of how his heart is with regard to God—He is mighty and glorious!’ These words—praise be to God—became like a bridle (81) for my heart. Whenever my heart was inclined to wander through the seas of forgetfulness, these words drew it back.

One time I heard him say: ‘The bondsman won’t attain knowledge of God the Sublime until he knows the lord of creation—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and he won’t know the lord of creation—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—until he knows his shaykh, and he won’t know his shaykh until men at large become dead in his sight and he doesn’t watch them and doesn’t heed them. So recite the prayers of the dead over them and divest your heart of concern for them!’<sup>137</sup> God had mercy on me through these words when I heard them and they were the cause of goodness entering into me. Regarding these words there’s an extensive commentary and a lengthy explanation but if I pursued this topic, it would take much time. What we’ve said is sufficient.

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And I requested of the jurists who were companions of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—that they write down some of his miracles that they witnessed. Then the trustworthy jurist Abū ‘Abd Allāh Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Ḥunayn al-Zīrārī<sup>138</sup> wrote to me and I showed what he wrote to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and the Shaykh confirmed it and verified it. The text of what al-Zīrārī wrote is as follows:

‘Praise be to God alone! From among the favors God has bestowed on me, one is that when I met with our Shaykh, the Imam and the high-minded Support (*ghawth*), Mawlāy ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Mawlāy Mas‘ūd, my heart was keenly attached to affairs of this world such as ploughing fields and trading and that sort of thing, so that because of this I was in a state of weariness and exhaustion, the world being my goal, while the hereafter was just so many confused dreams. I was one of those on whom God had bestowed some religious learning and I decided to enter the group of notaries (*‘udūl*) or to strive after an appointment to the office of judge—God protect us from such an eventuality! But then God—He is mighty and glorious—had mercy on me when I met the Shaykh, and God cleansed my heart. This He did through the Shaykh’s blessing and his good direction. Indeed, when I met him and studied with him and

<sup>137</sup> Cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 142, ll. -4 to -2; and p. 212, l. -1 to p. 213, l. 2; cf. ‘Sources’, p. 85.

<sup>138</sup> Unidentified.

he saw the nature of my baffling malady, he ordered me to sell the ploughing oxen I owned and to do this and that with the money. Moreover, what he said to do wasn't in contradiction to worldly matters, though in his interior he desired to efface such matters from my heart. How excellent this imam was and how good his direction! For in fact, whenever he wished to remove me from a wicked state, he only did so without my being aware of it. I came to find myself in a state that was better (82) and more admirable than before, and the wickedness of my previous state was clear to me and its darkness was evident. This was how this great imam proceeded with me and how he proceeded with all my brethren. If he found you in a base state, he wouldn't tell you outright to stop with the matter, nor would he denounce you because of it or wash his hands of you if you didn't stop. At times the carnal soul rejects this, and such behavior only provokes opposition. Instead, he'd be kind to you and to some extent depict what you were doing in a good light. Then little by little he'd conduct you until you found yourself in a state you hadn't been in and [now] you disapproved of the way you'd been—all this in a mood of happiness and good cheer. When he ordered me—God be pleased with him—to sell the oxen, after a few days God cleansed my heart of the love of farming; in fact I became averse to it. Then he ordered me to sell all the books I owned and to do with the money whatever my heart wished and whatever took my fancy. After that I experienced greed toward people at large and I became covetous of what they possessed. But he made me advance still further—God be pleased with him—until I became such that I ceased to see any profit or any loss in people, let alone feel greed toward them.

One of his acts of clairvoyance—God be pleased with him—is that during the period when I first met him, he asked me one day: "Do you have any clarified butter at home?" I replied: "Yes, I do, oh Sayyidī. I have such-and-such an amount." He said: "Bring me some of it." I replied: "Yes, I will." One of the brethren remarked: "Perhaps what remains won't be sufficient until the season when clarified butter is cheap." I said: "Yes, that's so." Then he asked—God be pleased with him: "Do you have enough to last until such-and-such a time?" I replied: "Yes, I do." He said: "Bring me whatever exceeds that amount." When the time in question arrived, for the love of God a man gave me an amount of clarified butter that I didn't measure. It proved to be sufficient until it was cheap again.

And one of them is that I consulted him—God be pleased with him and give us profit through him—concerning the sale of a certain quantity of crops I possessed. He said to me: "On the 5th of such-

and-such a month sell whatever you wish!" When the said month arrived, the high point for selling that crop was on the 5th and 6th of the month. On the 7th day God sent abundant rain and the price of the crop fell very low. Praise be to God!

Another is that I went to visit him and one of my wives was pregnant. I talked to him about this matter and he told me: "She'll give birth to a male child. His name will be Aḥmad." When I returned home, (83) I mentioned this to my wife, and it turned out as he said—God be pleased with him! Then my other wife became jealous because the first one had given birth to a male. She'd been breast-feeding a baby girl and she weaned her before it was time. She did this so she might get pregnant. I reproached her for it and she said: "But I'm pregnant and I was afraid for the girl." And she swore an oath to this effect. When I went to visit the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—I mentioned this story to him and he said: "She was lying. She's not pregnant at all." I returned home and found it was as he said—God be pleased with him! I remained at home for three months and then went to visit him again. He said to me: "Is your wife pregnant?" I replied: "I don't know, oh Sayyidī." He said: "She's been pregnant for the last fifteen days, and it will be a boy—if God is willing! Moreover, give it my name, and he'll resemble me—if God is willing!" When I returned home, I informed my wife of what he said. She was delighted. And she gave birth to a male, just as he said—God be pleased with him! And the child greatly resembled the Shaykh in his appearance.

Another one is that my first wife became pregnant a second time and I asked him about her pregnancy. He told me: "It will be a girl. Name it after my mother!" And it turned out as he said. We had a girl and I named it after his mother—God be pleased with him!

Another is that I was sitting with him one day and he was joking with me. He said to me: "Have you ever done such-and-such?" What he mentioned was a particular sin. I said no, thinking I hadn't done it. Then he said to me: "Think!", and he gave out a laugh. I swore an oath to him that I hadn't done it. I swore an oath a second and a third time, and then the fourth time I reflected and behold, I'd done this fifteen years ago in a distant region that's located about seven halting-stations from Fez. I felt ashamed. He perceived this in me and said: "Are you going to swear an oath now?" I replied: "No, oh Sayyidī", and I kissed his noble hand. Then I said to him: "How do you know about this, oh Sayyidī?" He replied: "Is anything hidden from God the Sublime? And it's the same with whomever God apprises of His secrets." He then informed me of things I'd done

before this and things I did after it. At his hand I turned to God in sincere repentance. Praise be to God!

And another is that I was sitting before him one day and he was reclining on his right side—God be pleased with him! He was midway between sleep and waking. Just then a wicked thought occurred in my heart—God protect me from this! (84) The Shaykh opened his eyes and said: “What did you say?” I replied: “Oh Sayyidī, I didn’t say anything.” He said: “What was it you said in your heart?” This made me feel ashamed, and I turned to God the Sublime in repentance.

Another of these was that one night I was alone with one of my wives, and she was lying down. I was joking with her and at a certain moment it happened that I directed my gaze at her genitals, intentionally and on purpose. When I returned to the Shaykh on a visit—and between us there was a distance of two halting-stations—he began to joke with me. At a certain point he said: “Oh religious scholars, what do you say about gazing at a wife’s genitals?” I told him what the religious scholars say, and he asked: “Do you do such a thing?” I replied: “No, I don’t”, forgetting what had happened. He said: “Not even on such-and-such a night?” I felt ashamed and remembered what I’d done. The Shaykh got up to leave and said: “Don’t do it again! Direct your gaze toward the Ka’ba—if God is willing!”

Another of these is that one night I brought together two of my wives in a single accommodation for the night, with the excuse that one of them was hindered from spending the night in her house. Each of them bedded down for the night in her own separate bedding, and I bedded down for the night by myself in my own bedding. And a fourth bed in the room remained unoccupied by anyone during the night. Then my carnal soul called me to have intercourse with one of the two wives, and I had intercourse with her, thinking that the other was asleep. When I’d slept a little, I arose and had intercourse with the other one, thinking that the first one was now asleep. Afterwards when I went to visit the Shaykh—and this I did quite frequently despite the great distance—one day he began to joke with me and at a certain moment he said: “What do you [religious scholars] say about bringing together two wives in one residence and having intercourse with both of them?” I understood he was referring to what I’d done. I asked: “Oh Sayyidī, how did you know about this?” He replied: “Who do you think was sleeping in the fourth bed?” I said: “Oh Sayyidī, I thought they were both asleep.” He replied: “The first one wasn’t asleep, nor was the second.

But in any case this isn't proper even if they were both asleep." I said: "Oh Sayyidī, what you say is correct practice." And I turned to God in repentance.

(85) And another is that one day I was sitting in his house with a group of the brethren and our mistress his wife wasn't at home. One of the companions present wished to go to the lavatory to relieve himself. The lavatory was located opposite the door to the house so that from the house you could see who was inside. Then behold, the Shaykh suddenly stood up—God be pleased with him—and he shut the house door in front of us. Then just as suddenly he sat down again. We had no idea why he did this. We simply remained perplexed. Then behold, his wife entered the house, and we understood this was why he acted as he did.

Another is that I went to visit him—God be pleased with him—and he sat with me in one of the rooms of his house until it was bedtime. Then he said: "Go to sleep now!" He went downstairs and I took off my clothes and lay down. Suddenly a hand came into the bed with me and tickled my belly. I burst out laughing and he laughed as well—God be pleased with him! He was in the lower part of the house where he spent the night. But I knew he was the one who did this.

Another of them is that I and a group of brethren made a journey and on our way back we strayed from the inhabited area—and we had no weapons with us or anything else to ward off the bandits. We alighted for the night in a perilous wasteland, a refuge for bandits. There we spent the night and while the companions slept, I and another man remained awake. Then not far from us we heard a lion. I said to the man: "Don't wake the companions, lest they be overcome with fear." Some of them had little experience. "Maybe God will ward off the lion from us!" When morning arrived, we began to travel and we found a hare nearby that appeared to have just died. Another time when I visited him with some of the brethren, I hadn't slept. I'd stayed up to guard the riding animals. When we arrived before him, I said: "Oh Sayyidī, I want to go to sleep. I didn't get any sleep yesterday." He asked: "Why's that?" I replied: "I was guarding the riding animals." He said to me—God be pleased with him: "What use is your guarding them? What would have happened if the bandits had attacked you on such-and-such a night?" He was referring to the night of the lion. I asked: "Oh Sayyidī, what do you mean?" He said: "Upon your reaching such-and-such a river, (86) didn't three people join you?" I replied: "Yes." He said: "When they ascended the mountain, they found four other men looking for

someone to rob. As soon as they met them, they told them about you, and the seven of them followed you to see where you'd spend the night. Then after you stopped for the night, they waited for you to fall asleep. Once they thought you were asleep, they came to attack you. But they found there was a lion near you. They said: "What should we do? If we fight with the lion, the group will hear us. If we attack the people, the lion will get in our way." So they let you go and went after another caravan. But when they didn't get anything from them either, they returned to you from a different direction. Now the lion opposed them from that direction as well, and they thought he was a different lion. One of them said: 'What sort of people are these? We came at them from this side and a lion protected them! We came at them from another side and still a lion protected them!' They wanted to understand, but God sealed their hearts."

Then I asked him about the hare. He replied: "The lion has a sense of honor like the offspring of Adam. And like the offspring of Adam if a fly lands on his face, he drives it away. That's the way this lion was. While the lion was lying down, the hare, not having seen him, suddenly came upon him, and the lion killed it."

Another one is that I was about to marry a woman from the Zīrāra tribe<sup>139</sup> and I didn't know what she was like. The Shaykh described her to me in a way I [later] found to be true. He told me things about her that only God could know. Then when I'd decided on the wedding night (*dukhūl*), he said to me: "On the wedding night I'll be with you." I asked him: "How will I know this, oh Sayyidī?" He replied: "I'll give you a sign." When I met my wife and had spoken a few words to her, suddenly her nose began to bleed. I asked her: "What happened to you?" She replied: "You struck me in the nose." I said nothing further to her since I knew our lord, the Imam, had done this. Later when I visited him and mentioned the matter to him, he said: "Yes. And if she hadn't shed that blood from her nose, she'd have fallen ill. This is because she came from a distant place and it was a cold day. The blood in her had thickened."

Another is that I was with him one day in his house—God be pleased with him—and he was doing something on the downstairs floor. I was on the floor above, standing up and gazing at a flat roof in front of me. Suddenly a woman came onto the roof and I saw she had a rosy face. I wondered whether this rosiness was from a sanguine complexion or from make-up. But every time I looked at

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139 Unidentified.

her, he looked at me and said: "Show some fear of God! Is this how you behave in my presence?" And then he started laughing—God be pleased with him!

(87) And another is that one time I went to visit him and I was riding a mule. When I came to a difficult place, I got down from the riding animal and let it walk by itself. Once it had passed over the spot and I wanted to mount it again, the mule ran off. I started crying out: "Oh Sayyidī Mawlāy ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz!" God saw to it that people appeared and they caught the mule. When I reached the Shaykh, he started laughing and said: "What's ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz to do if you're in one place and he's in another place? Sure, if I'd been there with you, I'd have given you help." But I replied: "Oh Sayyidī, none of that makes any difference to you!"

Another is that one day I was sitting in the Zāwiya of Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Fāsī,<sup>140</sup> leaning against the wall that faces the *qibla*. In front of me was a column and there was no one leaning against it, nor was there anyone between me and the column. I was recollecting God. After a while I got up to go to the Shaykh's house—God be pleased with him! After walking a few steps, I realized I'd forgotten something and went back for it. Then behold, I saw our lord the Imam standing by the column, putting on his *salhām*.<sup>141</sup> I'd been sure no one was there. I said: "Oh Sayyidī and Mawlāy, how long have you been in this place and when did you come here?" He replied: "I arrived when you began reciting such-and-such a recitation." But I'd been recollecting God in silence so that no one could hear me even if he were alongside me. And I realized he'd been there in such a way that he was hidden from eyes.

Another one is that something which is offensive to the noble divine law had occurred between myself and a woman outside my immediate family, though it wasn't serious. One day I was seated with al-Dabbāgh and talking with him about women when suddenly she came up in our conversation, though I don't know why. On the basis of his intuition he said to me: "I see a blue thread<sup>142</sup> between you and this woman. What went on here?" I remembered what had happened and I felt ashamed. Around five years had passed since the event.

Another is that one time I sought his advice about whether to buy some particular provisions, and he said to me: "Don't buy that!

<sup>140</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* II, pp. 270-79; died 1091/1680; he was buried in his *zāwiya* (ibid., p. 271, l. -3).

<sup>141</sup> On *salhām* see Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 501; a kind of black woollen cloak.

<sup>142</sup> See here p. 551.

You've got enough of it. Buy clarified butter instead. You don't have enough to last you (88) till it's in season again." I replied: "Yes, oh Sayyidī. On the other hand, a certain woman has deposited some clarified butter with me. One day when she was in my house and I mentioned I was short of butter, she said: 'Come now, I have plenty of clarified butter! Take whatever you need of it.' I don't know whether she meant it as a gift for the sake of God or as a loan, but I think she's sincere." For a moment he didn't reply. Then he said to me: "Buy clarified butter!" He repeated this a second and a third time. I realized the woman wouldn't fulfill what she said. And that's how the matter turned out. When it was the season to sell clarified butter, she came and sold it [all]. She'd been in my house and knew my situation and that I didn't have any [left]. But then God provided me with more [butter] than I'd hoped for from the woman, thanks to the Shaykh's blessing—God be pleased with him!

And another one is that a man had lent me some dirhems and also deposited another amount of dirhems with me. He then came to collect the loan, as well as the deposited money. I had none of the loan left, nor was it possible for me to sell anything to pay it back. I'd thought he'd be slow to need the money. I brought out the deposit for him and I began to recall the Shaykh in my heart so that the man wouldn't mention the loan. And the man remained silent. He didn't mention the loan, nor has he mentioned it up to now, and around six months have gone by. Furthermore, there was no doubt that he'd come to collect both sums of money. Praise be to God for this!

The above is what al-Zīrārī wrote down.

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And the trustworthy, truthful jurist Sayyidī °Alī b. °Abd Allāh al-Ṣabbāghī—God have mercy on him—wrote down for me the miracles he witnessed of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and I showed every word of it to the Shaykh and he acknowledged it and confirmed it in this respect, for my purpose in the present collection is to record only what I've seen with my own eyes or heard with my own ears from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! The text of what he wrote is as follows:

'Praise be to God alone! This is to record the miracles and the acts of clairvoyance that I witnessed of our Shaykh, the Imam and the greatest Master, the most celebrated Support (*al-ghawth*), my lord and patron, °Abd al-°Azīz b. Mawlāy Mas°ūd, and he belongs to the *sharīfs* of Fez whose lineage is renowned through the designation al-Dabbāghūn—God be pleased with him!



One of them is what happened when I first met him. I kept company with him and I received [benefit] from him—God be pleased with him! When I then returned to my family and around ten days had gone by, a serious problem arose involving one of my relatives. Certain people knew about it and certain people had been present, in all some twenty persons, young and old, male and female. The problem was such that if the (89) Makhzan heard of it, they'd destroy the whole tribe. I went forth into the countryside and cried out to him—God be pleased with him—three times in a loud voice, saying: “Oh Sayyidī, protect the tribe from the conflagration of this problem!” Then it was as if the problem had been buried under a mountain or cast into the sea. All the people who knew about it remained silent and acted as if they had no knowledge of it. Even if a person heard about it from someone in secret, he dismissed it as a lie. God protected the tribe and the one who'd caused the problem, thanks to the blessing of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

And another one occurred when I returned to him a second time. I witnessed his acts of clairvoyance—God be pleased with him—and the good answers he gave to those consulting him. Then I said: “Oh Sayyidī, whoever is near to you triumphs and is fortunate. Whenever he experiences a problem, he finds you close by and consults you about it. But what am I to do, oh Sayyidī, when it comes to any problems, since I'm four days' distance from you? Whom am I to consult?” He replied—God be pleased with him: “Whenever you have a problem and you don't know what to do, go forth into the countryside and perform two *rak'as* of prayer, and with each *rak'a* repeat eleven times the surah of the Qur'ān that begins: ‘Say He is God the One...’ When you end the prayer with the *salām*, call out to me three times. Be convinced and visualize that I'm there with you. Then consult with me about your problem and you'll surely receive the answer.”

A problem then confronted me and it caused me great difficulty. I went forth into the countryside and did as he'd ordered me and I soon found a solution, thanks to the Shaykh's blessing—God be pleased with him! At the time the brethren were in the Shaykh's presence—God be pleased with him—whereas I was four days' distance away. Afterwards when I met with the brethren, they asked me: “Did you do this and that on such-and-such a day?” I replied: “Yes, I did.” They said: “We were in the Shaykh's presence—God be pleased with him—and all of a sudden he laughed. Then he said: ‘Poor Sayyidī ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh, he has such an intention (*niyya*)! He's gone forth into the countryside and is calling: ‘Oh Mawlāy

‘Abd al-‘Azīz!’ But how far from him is ‘Abd al-‘Azīz!’” And when I met him—God be pleased with him—he said to me: “Never get upset because of a problem, no matter what need may afflict you.” Ever since he said these words to me, God has removed all cares from me. Whenever cares are about to descend on me because of a problem, God resolves the problem for me before it upsets me, thanks to the Shaykh’s blessing—God be pleased with him!’

I, al-Lamaṭī, asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘Is the matter of the two *rak‘as* of prayer something special for Sayyidī ‘Alī b. (90) ‘Abd Allāh or can whoever wishes make use of it?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Anyone who wishes can make use of it.’ For this reason I gave praise to God.

Sayyidī ‘Alī said: ‘And one of them is what happened to me with him the first time we bade each other farewell—and that was at the end of Ramaḍān. He said to me—God be pleased with him: “Bring me a ram and we’ll celebrate the Feast with it.” He meant the Great Feast [of the Immolation]. I replied: “Yes, I will, oh Sayyidī.” When the Feast was near at hand, I purchased two rams. At that time a close friend of mine from among the brethren was with the Shaykh. He lived two days’ distance from me, i.e. half the distance between me and the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! The Shaykh said to him: “So-and-so will come to you with two rams. Take one of them and celebrate the Feast with it, and bring me the other one.”

When I arrived before this brother, he told me what the Shaykh had said—God be pleased with him—and I had no doubt about the matter, since I’d seen what his position was with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! I said to him: “Take whichever one you wish.” He replied: “We’ll take the lesser of the two and we’ll bring the better one to the Shaykh.” So we left one there and we brought the one that appeared to us to be better.

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[Later] when the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—beheld the ram, he said to me: “Did So-and-so arrange this with you?<sup>143</sup> He’s taken the better of them and you’ve brought me the lesser one.” We said to him: “Oh Sayyidī, this is the one that appeared to us to be better and fatter!” He replied: “This fat of his is in his paunch.” And he never even saw the ram. Then the day they were slaughtered, the two rams turned out just as he’d said—God be pleased with him!

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143 Text uncertain.

But meanwhile when we'd left the first ram and intended to bring the other one, we said: "What are we to do with this ram? How can it accompany us, since we're on riding animals?" God then provided a troupe of sheep for us that was on its way to Fez, but no one with us was about to depart except a brother of mine by the same father. So we left him with this ram and he was to bring it along with the troupe of sheep. He didn't reach us until a day after we'd joined the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

When the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—(91) beheld my brother, he said to him: "You've brought us a ram. Now we'll give you a son." I said to him: "Oh Sayyidī, this is what he wants!" My brother had a strong desire for sons. He had a young wife who'd been with him for some fifteen years but she'd never given birth and had finally despaired of having children. She even accused her husband, saying it was he who was sterile. When we tethered the ram in a particular place, the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—took us to his house and it was then night. When he saw my brother in the lamplight, he said to him: "Come close to me!" He approached the Shaykh and the Shaykh, reading his forehead, said three times by means of clairvoyance: "Oh So-and-so, this child of yours won't be a [useless] dandy!"<sup>144</sup>

Then he asked him: "What will you name him?" My brother replied: "Oh Sayyidī, you name him as you wish." The Shaykh was silent for a moment and then he said: "Name him Raḥḥāl." The name hadn't existed among us in the tribe, and none of our ancestors bore this name. One of the brethren who were present asked: "Oh Sayyidī, where did you find this strange name that's never existed among them?" He laughed—God be pleased with him—and said: "This is the one I beheld." When we returned to our family, we found that the wife of my brother was pregnant. They hadn't known about it before. Thus a son was born to him, and they named him Raḥḥāl, as the Shaykh had instructed—God be pleased with him! And this name caused surprise among the people.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that he named him Raḥḥāl [the one who departs] as an indication that he'd depart [from life] and wouldn't linger. And so it turned out. The boy lived about three years and died. Thus the name contained a further miracle.

And I heard the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—say to the father of the boy after the boy's death: 'The first time I gave you one

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<sup>144</sup> See the sizeable entry in Dozy under *gandūr*: dandy, fop, etc.

who departs (*rahḥāl*), but this time I'm giving you one who'll stay with you and won't depart.'

Then Sayyidī 'Alī said: 'Another is that one day I went hunting with one of my companions, and I was a man who hunted with a gun. We ate something at breakfast time in our homes and then went forth into the countryside, but we didn't carry any bread with us, thinking we wouldn't be gone very long. We bagged a female gazelle at the foot of a mountain in our home country called Jalīdh,<sup>145</sup> in an area that contains a plain with many gazelles. (92) But this slowed us down and in the evening hunger came over us and we were sorry we hadn't brought some bread with us. Afterwards when I visited the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—he said to me: "Why did you go hunting Wednesday without taking along something to eat? A man met you and begged from you but found you didn't have anything to eat. Then you bagged a female gazelle at the foot of the mountain." He gave me a description of the whole region and described the mountain. And he told me: "On top of that mountain is a tiny spring of water the size of a bowl. It never dries up and it never flows beyond its place, nor does it increase or diminish." I wasn't familiar with the spring. Very few hunters have ever been to the top of the mountain—very few indeed! When I went back, I asked about that tiny spring and someone who knew it told me about it just as the Shaykh had described it—God be pleased with him!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the man who met him and begged from him was the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the man and he explained him for me. And I heard the Shaykh say: 'There is no god but God! How often I and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr<sup>146</sup> performed the prayers beside that little spring which is on top of the mountain. We were delighted with the spot because of its elevation.'

Then Sayyidī 'Alī said: 'And one of them is that on another occasion he described for me the whole of my native region and he described our house exactly as it is and other things as well, whereas he lives four days' distance away and has never seen it. It was just as he described it, with nothing added and nothing left out—God be pleased with him!

And one of them is that when I visited him another time and he described our house just as it was, he said: "Why do you tether your horses in that place? A godly man is buried there beneath the legs of

<sup>145</sup> Unidentified; (Jalīl instead of Jalīdh?).

<sup>146</sup> One of al-Dabbāgh's shaykhs; see p. 727.

your horses!" We'd never seen the traces of a grave and there was no graveyard near us. About a half mile lay between us and the graveyard. Then he said to me—God be pleased with him: "There are seven graves in your courtyard (*murāḥ*) but don't worry about any of them except that grave beneath the horses' legs. Move your horses from the spot, and revere and honor the place. Put a fence around it to protect it from any harm." One of the brethren who were present asked: (93) "Oh Sayyidī, what community does he belong to?" He replied: "Bedouins from the area between Oujda<sup>147</sup> and Tlemcen.<sup>148</sup> He was associated with al-Ṣabbāghāt, and they considered him to be one of the religious students (*ṭalaba*). He wasn't known among them for his godliness. He died and was buried there." We began to name bedouins for him who live between Oujda and Tlemcen. And he said no [each time] until we mentioned the Awlād Riyāḥ.<sup>149</sup> Then he said: "He was one of them!" And the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—didn't know our region or our house, nor did he know Oujda or Tlemcen, nor did he know the bedouins between those two cities. He'd never set foot in that area or seen it. He then said to me: "If you want to know about the grave, take a hoe and dig with it. You'll find the grave." I asked him: "Oh Sayyidī, where is it located in the courtyard?" He told me: "It lies to the west of your son's room and outside it, opposite the underground storage room for grain (*maṭmūra*) that's to one side of the courtyard gate." In the courtyard we have three underground storage rooms. When I went back to my family, I told them about this. We took a hoe and with it we dug up the spot he described. We found the situation in every respect just as he recounted—God be pleased with him! The people were amazed by this.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'Why was the only grave he had to worry about in his courtyard the one that belonged to this Friend of God?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Because this Friend of God's spirit (*rūḥ*) was at liberty, while the spirits of the others were confined within Barzakh.<sup>150</sup> Indeed, a long period of time has elapsed since these graves were

<sup>147</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names; Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description* II, pp. 327 f.

<sup>148</sup> City in present-day western Algeria; cf. EI s.v.

<sup>149</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>150</sup> See Chapter Ten that deals with Barzakh, the place where spirits reside before entering individual bodies and where, after death, they await the Resurrection.

dug; they're around three hundred years old.' Thus the difficulty was removed for me. Praise be to God for that!

Then Sayyidi 'Alī said: 'Another one is that my cousin on my father's side, who was also related to me by marriage, set out with me to visit him—God be pleased with him—and so we came before the Shaykh. My cousin's wife whom we left behind was pregnant and, in visiting the Shaykh, my cousin's intention was to complain to the Shaykh about his meagre means and his oppressive poverty. This was his first visit to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! When the Shaykh saw him, he asked him: "Do you have a wife?" He replied: "Yes, oh Sayyidi." The Shaykh asked him: "Is she pregnant?" He replied: "Yes, oh Sayyidi." And he asked him: "Would you like her to bear you a daughter blessed with wealth?" He replied: "Yes, indeed! That would be a joy to me, oh Sayyidi. That's what (94) we'd like." Thus the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—combined for my cousin news of a daughter and the provision of wealth which was my cousin's desire. When he returned to his family, he found that his wife had given birth to a girl. He arrived at mid-morning on the seventh day after her birth and found them considering what name to give her. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—had asked him: "What will you name her?" He'd replied: "Whatever you wish, oh Sayyidi." The Shaykh named her Khadija.<sup>151</sup> This had never been a name among us and so the people were surprised by it.'

I, al-Lama'i, asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'Why did you give her the name Khadija?' He replied: 'Everyone whom God has given illumination and who's known happiness and attained the great illumination, if he desired to marry a woman, has wished her name to be Khadija. And if a daughter is born to me, I'd like her name to be Khadija, because the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—enjoyed felicity thanks to our mistress Khadija and with her he attained the two goods, that of this world and the world to come.'

Then Sayyidi 'Alī said: 'Another one is that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—described to me my wife from head to foot, limb by limb, the parts of her that are visible and the parts that are hidden, and his description was exactly as she is, with nothing added and nothing left out—God be pleased with him! Had I myself been charged with giving a description of her, I couldn't have described her as well as he did—God be pleased with him! By God, had she

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<sup>151</sup> The Prophet Muḥammad's distinguished first wife.

been standing in front of him, he couldn't have been more knowledgeable about her. And she was four days' distance from him, and he'd never laid eyes on her.

Another one is that I was a man who slept a lot. Sometimes I'd wake up at the arrival of dawn and have intercourse with my wife at that time. And sometimes dawn found me still asleep. When I was with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—he said to the brethren who were present: “Whenever I come to see So-and-so at the arrival of dawn, either I find him asleep or he's having intercourse with his wife at that time.” One of the brethren present asked: “Oh Sayyidi, which is preferable, intercourse with one's wife or being asleep at that time?” He replied—God be pleased with him: “Intercourse with one's wife is preferable to being asleep at that time. However, if one has intercourse with one's wife during the hours of the prayers and a child is produced, the child will most certainly be disobedient to his parents—if God so wills!” Once I heard these words of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—I renounced this practice and turned to God in repentance, nor did I ever do this again or remain asleep at that hour.’

(95) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that his saying the child produced by intercourse at that hour will be disobedient constitutes a further miracle. Sayyidi ʿAlī b. ʿAbd Allāh—God have mercy on him—often complained of his children's disobedience. And we've seen some of them do outrageous things to him.

‘Another one is that I was a man who indulged in much amorous play with my wife and I thought up numerous variations of amorous play with her. I mentioned some of this to a close friend among the brethren and he mentioned it to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—in the manner of someone who reproached me. At that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—laughed and said: “He has only told you some of the things he does. There's more than that. In fact, he does such-and-such, and this thing and the other!” And he told him everything I was wont to do—and this while I was listening. Now there was no person who could have revealed this to anyone, indeed nobody knew about it except God the Sublime. And the Shaykh added—God be pleased with him: “But this is in accordance with the Sunna. Everything like this that a person does counts as good deeds.” His words delighted me. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!

The above is what we could recall at the time of writing this down. But his miracles—God be pleased with him—are too numerous to be counted. God give us profit through him and see that we persist in

our love for him until death overtakes us, and God gather us on the Day of Resurrection in the Shaykh's party, by the rank of our lord Muḥammad, His Prophet and His dear friend—God's blessings and peace be upon him, and upon his family and Companions!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that God answered his prayer. For when death drew near to him—God have mercy on him and be pleased with him—his heart informed him of his imminent fate. He bade farewell to his family in al-Ṣabbāghāt and said to his wife: 'I'm going to the Shaykh in Fez to die in his company—God be pleased with him!' And he went to the Shaykh—God give us profit through him—and he fell ill. The Shaykh ordered him to make his final testament and to prepare to meet God—He is mighty and glorious! He obeyed the Shaykh's command—God be pleased with him—and the Shaykh, in his own house, nursed him. Likewise, his wife and the others with her did for him what's appropriate for the sick. When death was near at hand, the Shaykh who was in the room, whereas Sayyidī °Alī was in the *saqlābiyya*,<sup>152</sup> said to those present—God be pleased with him: 'Sayyidī °Alī has now seen the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—as well as Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him!' They then went upstairs to Sayyidī °Alī to question him, but they found that his tongue was impeded. They spoke to him and he understood their words, for he nodded his head to indicate yes. Then he opened his mouth as if to laugh and after that his smile and his joy remained visible until the moment his spirit left him. And I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: (96) 'God—He is mighty and glorious—has had mercy on him, through His grace and His generosity! Had he sat in al-Ṣabbāghāt for ninety years, he wouldn't have attained the state in which he's died.'

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And the jurist Sayyidī °Abd Allāh b. °Alī al-Tāzī<sup>153</sup> wrote to me what some of his companions witnessed and I presented this as well to the Shaykh and he confirmed its veracity. The text is as follows:

'Praise be to God! This is an account of some of the miracles of our Shaykh, our treasure and our storehouse, Support (*ghawth*) of the age and fountainhead of divine knowledge (°*irfān*), our lord and our protector, °Abd al-°Azīz—God give us profit through him! Amen!

Among his miracles is what the reliable authority Sayyidī °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Makhūkhī<sup>154</sup> reported to us. One day he was with the

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<sup>152</sup> *saqlābiyya*: a small room used for storage; Cigar vocalizes it as *saqallābiyya*; cf. Beaussier's *Dictionnaire*.

<sup>153</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>154</sup> Unidentified.



Shaykh—God be pleased with him—in front of the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs. Also with the Shaykh at that time—God be pleased with him—was the most erudite Shaykh Sayyidī Aḥmad b. Mubārak.<sup>155</sup> Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān said: “The Shaykh sent me to his house to attend to some matter. I set off for the house, walking quickly, and I left the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—at the above-mentioned spot. When I reached the house, I found a man there who was looking for the Shaykh so as to take his clothes and wash them. While we were waiting for the Shaykh to arrive from the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs, behold, he came forth from his house—God be pleased with him—and he had his clothes in his hand. These he gave to the man who wanted to wash them. When I left him at the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs, he had on a pair of wooden clogs and was walking through the road’s mud and mire caused by heavy rains. Even if he’d had on his sandals and walked at his usual pace, he couldn’t have reached the house before me, because I got there with the greatest possible speed.”

Another one that Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān related is: “The Shaykh had a pair of glasses (*mirʿāh*) that he used to look at books with. These glasses became lost, and I brought him another pair from his dear and intimate friend, al-Ḥājj Muḥammad al-Kawwāsh.<sup>156</sup> But he found that they weren’t suitable and he said: ‘Look for the first glasses which were clear. Maybe you’ll find them.’ We took the book he used to leave the glasses in and examined it page by page, more than one time, and we didn’t find them there. Then the Shaykh got angry and his face became distorted. I said to him: ‘Oh Sayyidī, what’s happening to you?’ He replied: ‘I’m angry at these glasses.’ He then lifted up the book (97) we’d just been examining. The glasses that weren’t the good ones were on his nose and they fell off. When he put the book down, there lying on the back of the book were the missing glasses. He said to his son Mawlāy ʿUmar: ‘Tell your mother: “Praise be to God! He’s given me back my glasses!”’”

And Sayyidī ʿAbd al-Raḥmān said: “We use to sit with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—during the season of extreme cold and we’d observe his forehead flowing with a great flood of sweat. Then we observed that this state changed in him. I said to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘What caused this state to change?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The sweat that poured off me was in the beginning when [higher] vision was sometimes present and sometimes absent. When it was absent, I was

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<sup>155</sup> This is al-Lamaʿī himself.

<sup>156</sup> Unidentified.

like any other person, but when it returned, it removed me from a human being's state. When it disappeared, I returned to a human state and when it came back, it removed me from that state. And this would hurt me very much. But once vision became permanent in me and didn't disappear any more, my body grew accustomed to it and was no longer affected by it."

Another one is what happened to the recorder of this story, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Alī, and to his brother, the above-mentioned 'Abd al-Rahmān. One day they went up onto the roof of the Madrasat al-<sup>°</sup>Attārīn.<sup>157</sup> They said: "On the roofs of the houses we saw women, some in groups, some alone, and we began to look at them and comment on them to one another. Sometimes we broke out laughing. At a certain moment one of us leapt into the air due to the force of the joking that came over us. When we arrived at the Shaykh's house—God be pleased with him—and had sat down in the well-known *saqlābiyya*, he began to laugh out loud—God be pleased with him—and he said: 'How pleasant it would be if I were a shaykh without clairvoyance!' Then he said: 'Where have you been? Tell me the truth and don't lie to me!' We told him the situation as it was. He began to tell us the part about the women—God be pleased with him—and where they were positioned on the roofs, as if he'd been there with us. He also reminded us of the above-mentioned leap, without our having told him about it. He told us—God be pleased with him—that at that moment he'd been sitting with someone who came to visit him but then he suddenly burst out laughing. That was when he witnessed the leap. The person present with him thought the Shaykh was laughing at him."

Sayyidī 'Abd al-Rahmān said: "My wife was pregnant, and when we came to the Shaykh, we mentioned the pregnancy to him." Someone who was present—by way of teasing Sayyidī 'Abd al-Rahmān—exclaimed: "It's a girl!" But then the Shaykh said to him: "Come closer to me!" And he whispered in his ear: "By God, it will be a male child!" And the matter turned out as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him!

(98) And he said: "I went to visit him another time and I left a sick son [at home]. I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—to invoke a cure on his behalf. But he replied: 'Excuse me for now. I'll pray for him another time.' Because of this I realized the boy would soon die. And that's how it turned out."

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<sup>157</sup> Le Tourneau, *Fès*, p. 69 and passim.

And he said: "I went to visit him another time and I left my wife pregnant [at home]. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—then said to me—and I was with him, whereas my wife was in Tāza: 'A daughter has been born to you!' And it was as he said—God be pleased with him!"

Another one is that Sayyidī °Abd al-Rahmān said: "I set out to visit the Shaykh in Fez and I had thirty *ūqiyyas*<sup>158</sup> for the Shaykh. Then as I was approaching the city, I took one *ūqiyya* [for myself] from the sum. When I presented the dirhems to the Shaykh, he said to me: 'You haven't abandoned your foolishness! Arise and buy me one *mawzūna*'s worth of dates and some cheese for three *mawzūnas*, in place of the *ūqiyya* you took [for yourself].' At that I said: 'Oh Sayyidī, you've acquitted yourself with grace and intelligence!'"

And another one is that Sayyidī °Abd al-Rahmān said: "I set out with the intention of visiting the Shaykh, and when I'd seated myself in front of him, he said to me: 'What was that you were doing Saturday night?' I replied: 'Oh Sayyidī, what do you mean?' He said: 'You had intercourse with your wife, but you sat your infant son on the pillow when he wouldn't go to sleep and the lamp was on top of the chest! Or didn't you know that I was there with you?'"

But, in general, the miracles of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—are too numerous to be counted.'

This is what Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Tāzī wrote down.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that from that time up until our present day innumerable miracles of the Shaykh's have appeared—God be pleased with him! The testimony of the above people was recorded toward the end of the year 1128/1716, and what they wrote I showed to the Shaykh on the day of °Ashūrā°, the 10th of Muḥarram, at the beginning of the year 1129/24 December 1716.

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(99) And the trustworthy and reputable jurist Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Ziyādī<sup>159</sup> wrote down for me [some of the Shaykh's miracles] and I was present at most of what he describes and I saw it with my own eyes. Anything that occurred when I wasn't present, I asked the Shaykh about—God be pleased with him—and he confirmed it. The text of what he wrote is as follows:

'One of the things that happened to me with our Shaykh, the Imam and Support of mankind, my lord and master °Abd al-°Azīz—God give me profit through him—was this. I used to buy books for one of the scribes of the Makhzan, and I'd bought a large number of books

<sup>158</sup> One *ūqiyya* (silver) is four *mawzūnas*; cf. Cigar, p. 271.

<sup>159</sup> Unidentified.

and paid for them on his behalf and he'd reimbursed me the money before he received them. But when the books did reach him, he was angry and fulminated against them because they weren't to his liking. He sent them back and ordered me to return them to their owners. "Otherwise we'll do with you whatever takes our fancy!" This matter caused me anxiety and distress. I felt saddened and was worried. Because of his power I was very frightened of the scribe. I went to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and told him about the problem. I said to him: "The owners refuse to take back the books. I'm perplexed and frightened. Nor do I have the means to refund the scribe the price he paid me. And this scribe has power over my family. But these are only some of the difficulties I'm facing at the moment." The Shaykh replied to me—God be pleased with him: "My child, don't be afraid of anything—if God is willing! Relief and a way out of the difficulty are near at hand—if God is willing!" Not long thereafter God afforded us relief through the death of the scribe. The sultan—God give him victory—had the scribe executed, and release from distress occurred just as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him!

Another one is that a great turmoil befell our country Tāmisnā.<sup>160</sup> The region's judge was my brother in God—He is mighty and glorious—and I was afraid for his sake. I went to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—to ask him to pray for my brother's well-being. The Shaykh said: "As for Sayyid Ṭāhir, don't be afraid that anything bad will happen to him. As for the scribe, however, I won't guarantee him." I hadn't asked him to pray for the scribe, though he was also joined in brotherhood to myself and the above-mentioned judge. He was the owner of the previously referred to books. And the matter turned out as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! The judge suffered no harm but the scribe was executed.

And another one is that when we learned of the scribe's death—and only a few people knew of it—I went to the Shaykh's house—God be pleased with him! I knocked on the door and he came out. Without (100) our telling him of the scribe's death, the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: "Is that scribe dead?" I replied: "Yes, oh Sayyidī." He said: "This is what I told you before." And he added: "Do you have some of his books?" I replied: "Yes, oh Sayyidī." He said to me: "God will cause matters to turn out happily and for the best." These words of the Shaykh frightened me and I

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<sup>160</sup> A large province extending south from Rabat; cf. Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description* I, pp. 157-69 and map on p. 157; *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names.

was gripped by extreme terror. I lowered my head over the Shaykh's hand and kissed it, saying: "Oh Sayyidī, the case of this scribe makes me very afraid." The Shaykh's companions who were present supported me and requested that the Shaykh invoke God on my behalf. But the Shaykh said to me and to them when they beseeched him: "An inquiry is inevitable, but it will turn out well—if God is willing!" Thereafter I waited expectantly concerning the matter. Then there was an inquiry and an investigation and an examination of everyone who'd had any dealings with the scribe. Whoever they caught suffered different forms of affliction such as being beheaded, having his wealth confiscated and his women dishonored. The situation terrified me and my fear went on increasing. Then I went to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and he said: "Not death, but you may suffer an ordeal!" Shortly afterwards a man came to take me to Miknāsa. I went with him to the Shaykh and the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—received him with cheerfulness and delight. He invoked blessings on the man's behalf and urged him to take good care of me. The man replied: "As I value my head and my eyes, oh Sayyidī." The Shaykh said to me: "You'll return unharmed." Moreover, the Shaykh asked the man to convey his greetings to the officer in charge of the investigation regarding the above-mentioned scribe. I then went to Miknāsa and gave them the books that belonged to the scribe. They took the books and bade me farewell, and I returned to Fez. Praise be to God!

However, there still remained one of those persons who ingratiate themselves with tyrants and he set out to turn the officer in charge against me. Fabricating so many lies, he said: "He's kept possessions belonging to the scribe." I'd only been in Fez for a week when the same man as before came back. He made a show of affection and friendship and said: "Your friend (*muḥibb*) the judge of Tāmisnā, after learning of the favorable decision of the case, wrote to the above-mentioned officer to the effect that: 'Have So-and-so come and meet me in the city of Salā.'<sup>161</sup> So if you'd like to go, that's fine. Or if you prefer to remain here, that's fine too." I went with him to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and the man began to tell him the same thing. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—didn't reply (101) to the man. The Shaykh said to me: "Oh So-and-so, my advice to you regarding what to do is that you go without fail with this man. And you must take along thirty *ūqiyyas* to give to the previously referred to officer in charge. Then the above-mentioned

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<sup>161</sup> On Salā see EI s.v.

man said: "Oh Sayyidī, this is what seems best to me as well. But al-Sayyid al-ʿArabī knows best."

Then I said: "Oh Sayyidī, if he wants to take me to see my 'brother', al-Sayyid al-Ṭāhir the judge, why must I go with him without fail? And why am I to bring thirty *ūqiyyas* with me?" He replied to me—God be pleased with him: "Listen to what I say! What I'm telling you is important." I was unaware of the evil contained in the man's heart and that what he said to me was a stratagem and a deceit. Since I didn't understand and I persisted in my heedlessness, the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—explained to me what their intentions were, while the man stood there listening. But the Shaykh revealed this with a laugh. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said to me when we were about to leave him: "Don't be afraid of death, though you'll be held in prison." I then went with the man to Miknāsa but I didn't take the thirty *ūqiyyas*, as the Shaykh ordered. When we reached Miknāsa, the officer in charge of the investigation turned his back on me. He ordered me to be imprisoned in his house and he kept me from coming forth until he could consult about me with the sultan—God give him victory! He'd consulted about people before me and then had them executed—people from my own region. I was gripped by such dread as God alone knows and I exclaimed: "All that remains is my execution!" The officer in charge went off to consult the sultan but through the Shaykh's blessing—God be pleased with him—he happened to come upon the covering of the shrine of Sayyidī Abū'l-ʿAbbās al-Sabī<sup>162</sup> which one of the "brethren" of the above-mentioned scribe had brought. Thereupon the sultan let this "brother" go, as well as everyone else associated with the scribe. Thus through the Shaykh's blessing—God be pleased with him—I attained release from suffering, except that they detained me for forced labor (*sukhra*). The labor involved amounted to thirty *ūqiyyas*. I remembered the words of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—when he said: "Take thirty *ūqiyyas* with you." Meanwhile, I went on rising and falling<sup>163</sup> until God provided me with the money—through His grace, His nobility and His generosity. Thus God set me free. The trials and tribulations were over. Praise be to God! And all this was due to the blessing of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

(102) And another one is that after the prayer of sunset I went to his house—God be pleased with him—and sat down at his door for quite a long time. I didn't knock at the door. He then came down—

<sup>162</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw*. IV, pp. 387 f.; a contemporary of Ibn al-ʿArabī.

<sup>163</sup> Exact meaning unclear.

God be pleased with him—from the *saqlābiyya*. I heard the sound he made on the steps of the staircase. Then he called to me: “Oh So-and-so!” I replied: “Yes, Sayyidī.” He said to me—God be pleased with him: “You’ve been at the door for some time now, haven’t you?” I replied: “Yes, Sayyidī.” Darkness was descending and I hadn’t knocked at the door, nor had I informed anyone that I was at the door—up until he called to me! He came forth and I kissed his blessed hand.

Another is that I didn’t sleep in my room in the *madrassa* one night. Then I went to see him in the early morning—God be pleased with him! He came forth to me and said: “Where did you spend last night? Why didn’t you spend the night in your room?” I said: “Oh Sayyidī, I did spend the night in my room.” I wanted to evade the issue. He said: “Didn’t you spend the night in such-and-such a place?” But I replied: “No, oh Sayyidī!” He said to me—God be pleased with him: “If you don’t tell me the truth, I’ll inform you of everything you did yesterday in that place.” I was afraid of being humiliated and I kissed his noble hand and replied: “What you said is true, oh Sayyidī.”

And another is that one day I was in the school and I had a dispute about the Shaykh’s standing—God be pleased with him—with a man who was ignorant of the Shaykh’s high degree—God give us profit through him! When I went to the Shaykh after that, he said: “Who was the man you were talking to yesterday? What did you say? And what did he say?” I simply remained silent. Then he proceeded to tell the whole story exactly as it was—God be pleased with him!

The miracles of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—are too numerous to be counted.’

This is what the jurist al-Ziyādī wrote down.

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I, al-Lamaṭī, have the following to say. One of the miracles of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—is that I was talking to him one day about a certain man and I said: ‘Oh Sayyidī, he loves you very dearly.’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘No, he doesn’t love me! If you want to test him, make it clear to him in your talk that you no longer love me and listen to what he says to you.’ Then the man came to me and I said to him: ‘Oh So-and-so, things seem different to me now.’ I proceeded to indicate what sounded like I had turned against the Shaykh. The man reacted quickly and said: ‘I told you (103) this already.’ And he revealed his malicious inner thoughts. At that I said to him: ‘My intention was to test you and now it’s clear what you really think.’ The man was filled with regret. I informed

the Shaykh of this—God be pleased with him—and he said to me: ‘Isn’t that what I told you?’

Another one is that I was sitting with him in the *saqlābiyya*—God be pleased with him—and we were talking of one thing and another when suddenly the Sayyida his wife burst out in tears and began turning about the house. Her liver was consumed with grief at what she’d heard, namely news had reached her of her brother’s death—and he was away from home. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—looked down [from the *saqlābiyya*] and said to her: ‘He’s not dead! The person who brought you news of his death is lying.’ And he swore an oath to this effect. But by God she didn’t [immediately] recover from her state, due to the force of what afflicted her. Later, news came that the matter was just as the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! Even now her brother is still alive.

And another one is that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was walking up to the *‘arṣa*<sup>164</sup> when a man met him who had a close relative who was away at the army camp (*al-maḥalla*) with Mawlāy ‘Abd al-Malik,<sup>165</sup> the son of the sultan—God give him victory! The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—saw that he was sitting with a certain person reputed for godliness but who wasn’t one of the godly. The man rose and coming before the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said: ‘Oh Sayyidī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, give me news of my brother who’s away’, i.e. in the army camp. ‘Is he alive or is he dead? Sayyidī So-and-so’—he meant the referred to person with the reputation for godliness—‘has given me news of him. He says he’s alive.’ The Shaykh pretended he didn’t know anything about him, but the man insisted he give him information. The Shaykh then said: ‘Since you insist, receive this true news! God have mercy on al-Ḥājj ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Subkī’—and he was the absent relative. ‘The one who performed prayers over him the day he died will give you news of him. The son of the sultan executed him.’ Later, news arrived confirming what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him!

Another one is that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—had a servant who worked on a monthly basis in the *‘arṣa* (104), and every month he paid him his wages. The servant was in hiding from the oppression of the Makhzan, and he had a brother who was searching for him and intended to expose him to calamities. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—spoke to him telling him to leave his brother alone but he refused to do so. The situation reached the point where

<sup>164</sup> *‘arṣa*: areas within the city walls of Fez kept for gardens and orchards. See Le Tourneau, *Fès*, pp. 164 and 483; *Nashr al-mathānī* I, p. 47.

<sup>165</sup> A son of sultan Ismā‘il who was later to become sultan himself.



the man went to the commandant (*qā'id*) and said: 'My brother is with Mawlāy ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz and he's keeping him from me.' The commandant then dispatched his agent. While I was sitting with the Shaykh in the ʿarṣa—God be pleased with him—the dispatched officer suddenly approached and said to the Shaykh: 'Get up! We're going to the commandant.' The Shaykh replied: 'Me?' The officer said: 'Yes, you!' The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'To hear is to obey. I'm only a miserable subject.' And the Shaykh ordered me: 'Get up!', and we set out in the direction of the commandant. But the officer then felt regret. He said: 'Oh Sayyidī, the matter is about the brother of this plaintiff. Just give him over to us and go back.' The Shaykh replied: 'Have I been keeping him from you?' They then arrested him and took him away. When less than a month had gone by, his brother departed for the hereafter. After that the other brother returned to the ʿarṣa, and no one bothered him any more.

Another is the following. When what happened happened between the well-known tribe the Banū Yaznāsin<sup>166</sup> and the sultan, and the sultan vanquished those of them that he vanquished, a certain scribe from the people of Tāza wanted the same conflagration to spread to the people of Tāza as well. So he forged a letter from them in which it was indicated that they had notified the Banū Yaznāsin and told them: 'We're with you as one united body!' This he then took to the sultan—God give him victory—and read it to him. The sultan became angry and intended to dispatch a force to take revenge on them. But then matters became clear to him—God give him victory—and he arrested the scribe.

The people of Tāza heard of this and persons from among them went to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and sought counsel about fleeing and evacuating their region because they were afraid of the sultan. The Shaykh said to them—God be pleased with him: 'If you're prepared to do what I tell you, then I'll tell you.' They replied: 'Tell us, oh Sayyidī! We have come for no other reason than to be guided by your advice.' He said: 'Let this be your approach to the sultan—God give him victory! Go first to the vizier.'

They did what he ordered and the vizier brought them before the sultan. The vizier then praised them greatly and cleared them of the scribe's accusations. And it wasn't long before the sultan—God give him victory—ordered that the man be put to death. Such was the outcome of the scribe's affair.

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<sup>166</sup> Read Yaznāsin instead of Baztāsin. Cf. *Nashr al-mathārī* IV, index of place names.

(105) Something similar happened to another man. He was one of the men of Fez attached to the Makhzan, some twenty of whom were put to death in Shawwāl 1130/September 1718.<sup>167</sup> Due to God's decree, when this man heard about the [coming] inquiry and investigation—before the commandant (*qā'id*) was arrested—he went and consulted with the Shaykh about running away. The Shaykh said: 'Don't run away but go before the commandant in person and say to him: "Here I am! Do with me as you wish. I await your orders in obedience."'

The man went off and did what the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—instructed him. The commandant said to him: 'If you're such as you say, go to the district of Fajj<sup>168</sup> and stay with the musketeers (*rumāh*) who are in that district.' He then went back to the Shaykh and told him what the commandant ordered him to do. The Shaykh said to him: 'Decisiveness is decisiveness. Set out at once for the district indicated!'

A few days after he left, the commandant and his comrades were arrested, and the previously mentioned number of them died. God saved the above-mentioned man thanks to the blessing of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

And this was his usual practice in this matter—God be pleased with him! In every case where I saw someone consult him about running away from the Makhzan, he always ordered the person to present himself to the Makhzan and the outcome was always favorable. If I were to report all the stories that occurred in this regard, the account would become tedious.

Another one is that a certain governor was dismissed from his position by the sultan and the sultan relegated him to the corners of neglect. The man wrote to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and asked him to help him regain his governorship. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—gave him a promise to this effect and before one night and a day had elapsed, the sultan reappointed the man and he took up his previous position.

The Shaykh then wrote to him requesting that he exempt from certain taxes some persons who knew by heart the Book of God—He is mighty and glorious! But the man refused and wouldn't do so. Then the brother of this governor met the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and the Shaykh promised him that he'd occupy his brother's position. And that's how the matter turned out.

<sup>167</sup> Curiously, this event isn't mentioned in the *Nashr al-mathānī*.

<sup>168</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* IV, index of place names; present-day Figuig.

It was only a short time after his refusal to grant the Shaykh's request that the governor departed for the hereafter. His brother occupied his position and he carried out the Shaykh's request—God be pleased with him—on behalf of those dear people.

Another one is that when I first met the Shaykh, I was married to the daughter of the jurist and religious scholar, the erudite shaykh, Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Sijilmāsi<sup>169</sup> who was a resident in the Zāwiya of Mawlāy Idrīs al-Akbar,<sup>170</sup> as well as (106) its prayer leader and preacher. And I'd come to know his spiritual rank—God have mercy on him! I was deeply in love with his daughter because of her perfect intelligence, her pleasant company and her gentleness in everything she did.

When the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—learned of her importance in my heart and that I loved her more than I loved anyone else, on one occasion he actually asked me: 'Do you love me like you love her or do you love her more?' I replied to him truthfully, saying: 'I love her more.' For this I should be excused since at that time I was ignorant of the Shaykh's spiritual rank and that he was the Imam of that day and age.

The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was concerned because of this, as it was his right to be, for no good comes of the disciple until nothing remains in his heart but the shaykh, God and the Prophet. Thereupon he gave me guidance in this regard and wanted to effect a change in my situation but because I refused, what God foreordained then came to pass.<sup>171</sup>

One day I went before the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and this was the morning after the night of the 27th of Ramaḍān in the year 1125/17 October 1713. We went on talking until the Shaykh said: 'Associating with the Friends of God is like eating poison. After his disciple had come to know him, Sayyidī So-and-so left him neither a wife nor a child and finally caused him to be alone with him.'

I didn't understand his hint until my wife was afflicted with what afflicted her. This occurred shortly after what the Shaykh had said. She remained ill until she died—God have mercy on her! And the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—loved her dearly. May it benefit her! He was constantly with her during her illness and sent her drugs and potions and everything the sick find agreeable. He even

<sup>169</sup> Otherwise unidentified.

<sup>170</sup> See Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index, p. 641.

<sup>171</sup> From: '...for no good comes of the disciple...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 142, ll. -2 f.; cf. 'Sources', p. 85.

promised her a cure—he meant the cure of the hereafter, as he explained this to us.

When she died, my heart remained attached to the boy she left me and whenever I looked at him, my heart was apprehensive for his sake. He only lived a short while after his mother. God then took him away—He is mighty and glorious! I married another daughter of the above-mentioned jurist, and after the wedding night, by God, I found her superior to what I'd expected as far as her beauty, her comeliness, and her intelligence and perfection. She took possession of my heart. But only a brief time went by before God took her as well—He is mighty and glorious! It was then that God bestowed on me love of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—a love than which no higher love exists.

This happened while I was sitting with him in his house—God be pleased with him! He was talking about love of God and what such love is like, and I was putting numerous questions to him which he answered. (107) I've recorded this and you'll find it in the course of this book—if God is willing! Then he laughed—God be pleased with him—and said: 'What are we to do with you? You went on loving these two women in the world until God—He is mighty and glorious—gathered them unto His mercy and lodged them with all the spirits in Barzakh. But you still went on loving them with an absolute love. So where will God—He is mighty and glorious—transfer them from Barzakh and in what place will He keep them so they're absent from your heart?'

By God, at these words of the Shaykh my heart was purged of love for them, and all my love came to belong to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! I married a third daughter of the above-mentioned jurist—God have mercy on him—and my heart didn't become attached to her, and she's safe and in good health—praise be to God!

And another one is that the Shaykh's wife, the Sayyida, became pregnant and she said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz, I don't really want this pregnancy. I have my children to look after—praise be to God—and the hard work and upkeep of the house. Nor do I have a servant-girl to attend on me once this pregnancy is advanced. If the Friendship with God that you're known for is true, may God cause me to have a miscarriage. I have no need of this pregnancy.' And the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—had advised her to cover her head when she slept and not to bare her face lest she see something she couldn't support. But then it happened that one time she uncovered her face in the middle of the night and she saw with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—three men from the

invisible realm (*ahl al-ghayb*). An immense fear came over her and caused her to lose the foetus from her womb.

And this is another miracle which was witnessed by the people of his house and a person who'd come there on a visit. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—would [occasionally] experience a small absence from his body, so that to the person sitting with him he appeared like someone whose spirit has left him, and indeed no sign of breathing remained in his body—God be pleased with him—or any other sign of life in his lips and the veins near them.

Now this happened to him one day and the person who entered the room to meet him encountered a shining light resembling lightning, only it was slower and more serene. The person came forth and informed those present. They then went in and saw this with their own eyes.

The next day I met the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and I went outside with him to the *'arṣa*. He then exclaimed: “‘Verily, we belong to God, and unto Him we shall return!’”<sup>172</sup> And he added: ‘Yesterday something happened to me in public which is usually concealed when it takes place.’ I said: ‘Oh Sayyidī, I heard about this, but I didn’t understand the secret of the story.’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘This was the light of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’ And he described what happened—God give us profit through him!

(108) Another one is that I had a friend among those who’ve memorized the glorious Qur’ān and he belonged to the well-known tribe, the Ḥayāyina.<sup>173</sup> When in the year 1127/1715 the injustice and wickedness that occurred to this tribe occurred, I wrote to the official in charge of them concerning my friend and he exempted him from all taxes.

The official was then dismissed from his office after two years or so. The person put in charge of them was someone I was sure wouldn’t oppose what I said to him. I wrote to him concerning my friend but he didn’t carry out my request.

I intended to write to his chief but the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said to me: ‘If God wanted him to be exempted, the official in charge of them would have answered you and granted your wish.’ I ignored this and went ahead and wrote to the official’s superior.

<sup>172</sup> This Qur’ānic verse (2/156) is recited after someone has passed away and here apparently indicates that al-Dabbāgh had temporarily died.

<sup>173</sup> Read Ḥayāyina instead of Ḥabāniyya in the text; cf. also Jean-Léon l’Africain, *Description* I, p. 289.

Whoever among them received my letter was happy with it and declared he'd see to my request, but then God prevented anything from happening. I exerted myself in this matter innumerable times but God didn't allow the request to be fulfilled. I then realized the truth of the Shaykh's clairvoyance—God be pleased with him!

And another of them is that one day I was with him in the *ʿarṣa* and also with him was a *sharīf* from the offspring of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh—God give us profit through him! The *sharīf* said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, a man from the people of the mountain near Shaykh ʿAbd al-Salām's shrine has been charged by the *sharīfs* before the sultan. They informed the sultan that the man had married *sharīf* women, while he himself was of the common people. This is something the sultan—God give him victory—greatly disapproves of. When he heard about it, he ordered the man to be brought and had him imprisoned and promised to have him executed.'

The Shaykh exclaimed—God be pleased with him: 'Has he no fear of God? How dare he marry daughters of Mawlāy ʿAbd al-Salām while he's reproached for having negro blood!' <sup>174</sup> Then the *sharīf* said: 'Oh Sayyidī, how do you know about this? You're not acquainted with the man. You've never seen him or met him. I don't think you even heard of him before this. As far as the matter he's been reproached for, only a few from his tribe know about it!' He was amazed by the Shaykh's clairvoyance, and he kissed the Shaykh's noble hand.

Another one is what I saw written by his own noble hand. I saw it in the notebook of al-Hājj ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Tāzī. <sup>175</sup> When the Shaykh was young—God be pleased with him—he worked for ʿAbd al-Qādir making skullcaps (*shāshiyya*). This was after he'd already worked making them for another man named Muḥammad b. ʿUmar al-Dilāʾī. <sup>176</sup> The said Muḥammad b. ʿUmar (109) set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca and the Shaykh went to work for the above-mentioned al-Hājj ʿAbd al-Qādir.

Al-Hājj ʿAbd al-Qādir said to me: 'One day Sayyidī ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz took up the register and wrote in it: "Praise be to God alone! Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿUmar has died today and returned to the mercy of God. ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. Masʿūd al-Dabbāgh has said this and recorded it in the month of Dhū'l-Qaʿda in the year 1118/February 1707. God show him kindness—amen!'"

<sup>174</sup> The text is corrupt but no doubt represents a word for 'negritude' taken from a Romance language.

<sup>175</sup> *Nashr al-mathānī* III, pp. 388 f.; died 1149/1736.

<sup>176</sup> Unidentified.

Al-Ḥajj °Abd al-Qādir said: 'I called out to him and asked: "What are you writing?" And I'd witnessed some of his miracles before this. He then took the pen and crossed out what he'd written, saying: "I didn't write anything." When the pilgrims returned, they announced the death of the said Muḥammad b. °Umar in the month that the Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'How did this occur to you, since your illumination only took place in the year 1125/1713?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'From the moment I put on the trust (*al-amāna*) that Sayyidī al-°Arabī al-Fishtālī bequeathed to me, I experienced an illumination but it was constricted. If I directed my attention to something, I wasn't veiled from it but I didn't see anything else besides it.'

And I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what he said is true—God be pleased with him—for the people who associated with him during the second decade [of the century] have spoken of his acts of clairvoyance and miracles.

Another of them is that while he was working for the above-mentioned Muḥammad b. °Umar producing skullcaps, one morning he came near the cauldron they used in making the skullcaps and the man in charge of the cauldron shouted at him. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—became angry and said: 'By God, this cauldron won't heat up for you, no matter how much you stoke a fire under it!' And they went on stoking a fire under it from morning to late afternoon, consuming great quantities of firewood. But the water still remained cold.

Muḥammad b. °Umar was absent from the work place. When he returned and they informed him of the situation, he said: 'Oh Sayyidī °Abd al-°Azīz, do you want to ruin me? After all, I love you and I've treated you well. Moreover, this does no harm to the person who shouted at you. It only does harm to me. And I've committed no offense against you.' Thus he went on seeking to win the Shaykh's favor and sympathy—God be pleased with him!

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'I felt ashamed because of the great many favors he'd done for me. He paid me my wages whether I did any work or not. He used to say: "I've only taken you on for the sake of blessings. I don't need you (110) for the work."'

He said: 'So I took some firewood and, placing it under the cauldron, I said to them: "Really, you're not very good at making a fire! Look how the cauldron's starting to heat up!" Putting their hand in the water, they felt it was hot and they were amazed.' I heard this

story and miracle from many people and I heard it from the Shaykh as well.

And one of his miracles—God be pleased with him—is that I'd question him about the opinions of the religious scholars concerning problems, and he knew their opinions. He was familiar with the problems about which there's controversy, as well as those about which there's agreement. With regard to every problem, he knew the opinions of the religious scholars of externals (*al-zāhir*) and the religious scholars of the interior (*al-bāṭin*). I tested him on these matters for around six years. And he was familiar with events that took place in earlier periods.

One day I was with him in the al-Khamīs Market and I asked him about the cause of thunder and the cause of lightning and lightning bolts. On this subject he had precious things to say, such as only someone like himself could recount. Our talk went on until I mentioned to him the fire that appeared in Qurayẓa<sup>177</sup> on Jumādā'l-Ākhira in the year 654/1256. It's referred to by al-Qurṭubī in the *Tadhkira*,<sup>178</sup> and by the ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in his *Kitāb al-ḥitan*,<sup>179</sup> and by Abū Shāma and al-Nawawī.<sup>180</sup> These authors all describe the matter. I was about to mention what they've said but then—God be pleased with him—he began to tell of it and how it happened and he went on until he'd described what the scholars have said about it—God be pleased with them!

Furthermore, he added some other secrets that mustn't be mentioned concerning the cause of its outbreak (111) and the person responsible for starting the fire—who'll be punished in fire in the hereafter. I was overcome with amazement at this.

Know that the miracles of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—are too numerous to be counted and calculated. If I were to pursue the miracles I know and those that my companions know—God cause them to be revered—it would require a large volume to contain them. But let's set the limit at the present amount which is sufficient!

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<sup>177</sup> Normally the name Qurayẓa designates a Jewish tribe that was settled to the south-west of Medina; cf. EI, s.v.: Qurayẓa. For a description of the wondrous fire that threatened Medina see editor's ftn. I, p. 110.

<sup>178</sup> Not found in the *Tadhkira* of al-Qurṭubī.

<sup>179</sup> *Fath* XIV, p. 587. Clearly, al-Lamaṭī bases himself solely on Ibn Ḥajar who cites al-Qurṭubī, Abū Shāma and al-Nawawī. Abū Shāma (*Dhayl* I, p. 122), in any case, only speaks of an earthquake on the first day of the year.

<sup>180</sup> On al-Nawawī see 'Ibriziana', p. 134, XXXVI; unclear which of his works is meant.



And let's close this section with an awesome miracle the way we opened it with an awesome one, and that is that when I met him at the very beginning—God be pleased with him—and I saw the extent of his divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*) and the abundance of his faith, I set about examining him and I questioned him about which *ḥadīths* were true and which were false. I was in possession of a work by the *ḥāfiẓ* Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī [*al-Durar al-muntathira fī'l-aḥādīth al-mushtahira*]<sup>181</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him! This is a wondrous work in which al-Suyūṭī arranges in alphabetical order the *ḥadīths* famous among the people and stamps each *ḥadīth* with its proper stamp. He says that a true *ḥadīth* is true and a false one is false. The religious student (*tālib*) shouldn't be without this work for it's a precious book indeed. And I asked our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:

'I was ordered to pass judgement on what's visible, while God has charge over hidden matters.'<sup>182</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't say this.' The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says the same thing. And I asked him about the *ḥadīth*:

'I was an unknown treasure, etc.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't say this.' The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says the same thing, that there's no basis to its authenticity.<sup>183</sup>

And I asked him about the *ḥadīth*:

(112) 'When God created reason, etc.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't say this.' Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal<sup>184</sup> says the same and Ibn al-Jawzī<sup>185</sup> cites him in the *Mawḍūʿāt*<sup>186</sup> and Ibn Taymiyya<sup>187</sup> declares that it's false. Al-Zarkashī<sup>188</sup> says there's unanimous agreement that it's fabricated. The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī cites him to this effect in *al-Laʾālī al-maṣnūʿa fī'l-aḥādīth al-mawḍūʿa*,<sup>189</sup> even though in *al-Durar al-muntathira* he mentions a valid attestation for it.<sup>190</sup>

181 'Ibrīziana', p. 129, IV; al-Suyūṭī: GAL, S II, p. 180; died 911/1505.

182 *Durar*, p. 30, no. 33.

183 *Durar*, p. 106, no. 330.

184 On him see ftn. 109 above.

185 'Ibrīziana', p. 129, V; Ibn al-Jawzī: GAL I, p. 503; died 597/1200.

186 *Mawḍūʿāt* I, pp. 174 ff.

187 On him see GAL II, pp. 100 ff.; died 728/1328; 'Ibrīziana', p. 130, VI.

188 On him see ftn. 95 above.

189 'Ibrīziana', p. 130, VII; *Laʾālī* I, pp. 129 f.

190 *Durar*, p. 109, no. 344.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this attestation is one of the *ḥadīths* transmitted by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī<sup>191</sup> with an incomplete chain of transmission. Ibn Ḥajar states in the *Sharḥ*<sup>192</sup> that this category of *ḥadīths* transmitted by al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī doesn't constitute proof of authenticity.<sup>193</sup>

And I asked him about the *ḥadīth*:

'Offer help to the poor, for they will have power on the Day of Resurrection.'

He said: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't say this.' The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says the same in *al-Ḥāwī fī'l-fatāwī*.<sup>194</sup>

And I asked him about the *ḥadīth*:

'Love the Arabs for three reasons: because I'm an Arab, the Qur'ān is in Arabic, and the inhabitants of Paradise speak Arabic.'

He said: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't say this.'

(113) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is what Ibn al-Jawzī says in the *Mawḍū'āt*.<sup>195</sup> Moreover, al-Ḥākim's having accorded it the status of *ṣaḥīḥ* has been criticized.<sup>196</sup> And I asked him about:

'The religious scholars of my community are like the prophets of the Israelites.'

He said: 'This isn't a *ḥadīth*.' The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says the same in the *Durar*.<sup>197</sup>

And I asked him about the *ḥadīth*:

'Honor your paternal aunts the palm-trees, etc.'

He said: 'It isn't a *ḥadīth*.' Ibn Ḥajar says the same in the *Sharḥ*,<sup>198</sup> and so does al-Suyūṭī in *al-La'ālī al-maṣnū'a*<sup>199</sup> and Ibn al-Jawzī in the *Mawḍū'āt*.<sup>200</sup>

And I asked him about the *ḥadīth*:

191 On him see EI s.n.; he died 110/728.

192 Not found in the *Fatḥ*.

193 For more on the subject see al-Qārī, *Mawḍū'āt*, pp. 124 f., no. 84; pp. 286 f., no. 373; al-Sakhāwī, *Maqāṣid ḥasana*, p. 118; Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya, *Manār*, p. 66, no. 120.

194 'Ibriziana', p. 130, VIII; the *ḥadīth* is found in al-Qārī, *Mawḍū'āt*, pp. 78 f., no. 7. Al-Suyūṭī is referred to there without indicating which of his works is meant.

195 *Mawḍū'āt* II, p. 41.

196 On him see 'Ibriziana', p. 130, IX; died 405/1014; the reference here is most probably to his *Mustadrak*.

197 *Durar*, p. 97, no. 294.

198 Not found in the *Fatḥ*.

199 *Durar*, p. 44, no. 97.

200 Not found in Ibn al-Jawzī's *Mawḍū'āt*.

'I'm the most eloquent of those who pronounce the *ḍād* [i.e. those who speak Arabic].'

He said: 'This isn't a *ḥadīth*.' The *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Kathīr<sup>201</sup> says the same, and so does the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn al-Jazarī<sup>202</sup> in the *Nashr*<sup>203</sup> and the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī in the *Durar*.<sup>204</sup>

(114) And I questioned him about numerous *ḥadīths* beyond what I can count, and his remarks—God be pleased with him—agreed with what the religious scholars say. What's wondrous in his case and strange about his affair—God be pleased with him—is that when I delved more deeply into this subject with him, [it turned out] he knows which *ḥadīths* are mentioned in al-Bukhārī but lacking in Muslim, and which are mentioned in Muslim but lacking in al-Bukhārī. When I'd known him longer and I realized his knowledge of *ḥadīths* was more firm than anyone else's, I asked him what caused him to have this knowledge. One time he said: 'The words of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—aren't hidden.' I asked him another time and he replied: 'When a person speaks in the winter, steam comes out of his mouth, and when he speaks in the summer, steam doesn't come out of his mouth. Similarly, whoever repeats the words of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—light comes forth with the words, and whoever utters words other than the Prophet's, the words come forth without light.'

Another time I asked him this question and he replied: 'If a lamp is fed, its light grows brighter. If it's neglected, it remains the way it was. This is how the knowers of God are when they hear the Prophet's words—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Their lights grow bright and their divine insights increase. If they hear anyone else's words, they remain as they were.'

When the firmness of his authority in this matter was clear to me, as well as the fact that he was an unshakeable mountain regarding knowledge of what had passed the Prophet's lips—God's blessings and peace be upon him—I thought it right to examine him on the difference between the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*, though he didn't even know by heart the *ḥizb* '*Sabbih*',<sup>205</sup> let alone anything beyond that. One time I mentioned a Qur'ānic verse to him and I asked him: 'Is

201 See 'Ibrīziana', p. 130, X; died 774/1373; probably his *Tafsīr* is meant; cf. al-Qārī, *Mawḍū'āt*, pp. 116 f., no. 68; also in al-Suyūṭī; see ftn. 181 above.

202 'Ibrīziana', p. 130, XI; died 833/1429.

203 *Nashr* I, p. 220.

204 *Durar*, p. 31, no. 37.

205 A *ḥizb* is one of sixty divisions of the Qur'ān; cf. EI, s.v. *Ḥizb*.

this a *ḥadīth* or from the Qurʾān?’ He replied: ‘It’s from the Qurʾān.’ Then I mentioned to him a *ḥadīth* and I asked him: ‘Is this from the Qurʾān or a *ḥadīth*?’ He replied: ‘It’s a *ḥadīth*.’ I went on examining him on this subject for a long time until on one occasion I mentioned to him God the Sublime’s words:

‘Be mindful to perform the prayers and the prayer of the middle of the day’ (2/238), and this is the mid-afternoon prayer. ‘And stand praying to God with piety’ (2/238).

Then I asked: ‘Is this from the Qurʾān or a *ḥadīth*?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘It contains words from the Qurʾān and from *ḥadīth*. The words: “...and this is the mid-afternoon prayer” are from the mouth of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and not in the Qurʾān. (115) The rest is from the Qurʾān.’ And with me when I questioned him was a group of scholars of *fiqh* and, by God, we were all amazed by him. When I learned that the difference between the Qurʾān and the *ḥadīth* wasn’t hidden from him, I thought it right to examine him on the difference between the Qurʾān and the divine sayings (*aḥādīth qudsiyya*). Thus I mentioned to him a saying of God and asked whether it was from the Qurʾān. He replied: ‘It’s not from the Qurʾān. Nor is it a *ḥadīth* such as those you were asking me about earlier. This is a different kind of *ḥadīth*. It’s called a divine *ḥadīth*.’

I kissed his noble hand and said to him: ‘Oh Sayyidī, we wish that God and you would explain the difference between these three things. The divine saying resembles the Qurʾān as well as a *ḥadīth* which isn’t from God. It resembles the Qurʾān because it’s revelation, and it resembles a saying which isn’t divine because it isn’t recited in worship.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The difference between these three, though each has emerged from the Prophet’s mouth and each is accompanied by lights from his lights—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is that the light in the Qurʾān is eternal and comes from the essence (*dhāt*) of the True—He is sublime—because His word is eternal—He is exalted! And the light in the divine saying is from the Prophet’s spirit (*rūh*)—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and this isn’t like the light of the Qurʾān, since the Qurʾān’s light is eternal, whereas this other light isn’t. The light in the *ḥadīth* that isn’t divine is from the Prophet’s body (*dhāt*)—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! These are three lights from different sources. The light of the Qurʾān is from the essence of the True—He is sublime—and the light of divine sayings is from the Prophet’s spirit—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the

light of a *ḥadīth* that isn't a divine saying is from the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

Then I asked: 'What's the difference between light of the spirit and light of the body?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The body has been created from earth and all God's bondsmen have been created from earth. The spirit is from the Heavenly Assembly (the angels), and they are the creatures who are most knowledgeable about God the Sublime. And each feels longing for its origin. The light of the spirit is concerned with the True—He is sublime! The light of the body, on the other hand, is concerned with creation. Consequently, you see that the divine sayings concern the True—He is sublime and exalted—demonstrating His majesty or manifesting His mercy or calling attention to the extent of His dominion and the abundance of His gifts. The first of these is dealt with in the *ḥadīth*:

(116) "Oh My bondsmen, even if the first of you and the last of you, those among you who are human and those who are Jinn..."

...up to the end. And this is a *ḥadīth* transmitted by Abū Dharr in Muslim. And the second of these is in the *ḥadīth*:

"I've prepared for My pious bondsmen, etc."

And the third of these is in the *ḥadīth*:

"The hand of God is full. Using its abundance doesn't make it decrease. It offers provision night and day, etc."

These are from the spirit's sciences concerning God the Sublime. And you see that the *ḥadīths* that aren't divine sayings speak about what's good for countries and for bondsmen by mentioning what's licit and forbidden, and by urging obedience through recalling God's promises and threats.'

This is some of what I understood of his words—God be pleased with him! The truth is I haven't set forth all of it and haven't presented in full the meaning he indicated. And I asked: 'Is the divine saying the word of God—He is mighty and glorious—or not?' He replied: 'It's not the word of God. It's the word of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!' And I asked: 'Why is it attributed to God the Sublime and called a divine saying and presented as what he reported from his Lord? And if it's the word of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—what does it contain in the way of a report and what do you make of the pronouns in His words:

"Oh My bondsmen, even if the first of you and the last of you, etc." and His words: "I have arranged on behalf of My pious bondsmen...", and His words: "Some of My bondsmen have come to believe in Me, others are infidels."—?

Now these pronouns are only appropriate for God, and the divine sayings do belong to the word of God the Sublime, even if their words aren't inimitable (*i'jāz*)<sup>206</sup> and we don't recite them when worshipping.'

(117) And one time he replied—God be pleased with him: 'The lights from the True—He is sublime—waft over the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—until he obtains special vision (*mushāhada*), even though he's always in a state of vision. If with the lights he hears words from the True—He is sublime—or an angel comes down to him, this is the Qur'ān. But if he doesn't hear words and an angel doesn't come down to him, this is the occasion of a divine saying (*ḥadīth qudsī*). He then speaks—blessings and peace be upon him—and at that time he only speaks about Lordliness, glorifying it and mentioning its rightful claims. The reason for attributing these words to the Lord—He is sublime—is because they were accompanied by this vision in which matters were mixed in such a way that the hidden became visible and the inner became apparent. They were attributed to the Lord and referred to as "Lordly speech" and they were presented as "what he reported from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious!" And the reason for the pronouns is that the Prophet's words—blessings and peace be upon him—emerged as an account of the language of states (*lisān al-ḥāl*),<sup>207</sup> which he saw from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious!

As for the *ḥadīth* that isn't divine, it emerges with the light residing in the Prophet's body—blessings and peace be upon him—which is never absent from him. That's because God—He is mighty and glorious—provides the Prophet's body—blessings and peace be upon him—with the lights of the True, just as He provides the body of the sun with perceptible lights. The light is inherent in the noble body, the way the sun's light is inherent in the sun.'

And another time he said: 'Let's suppose someone suffers from a fever and his fever remains at a normal degree. Then let's suppose it's more intense so that it takes away a person's consciousness and he speaks without knowing what he's saying. And let's suppose on another occasion it becomes intense but the person doesn't lose consciousness. He retains his reason and when he speaks, he knows what he's saying. Thus the fever occurs in three states: a normal degree, an intensity that takes away consciousness, and an intensity which doesn't take away consciousness. It's the same with the lights

<sup>206</sup> On the concept of the Qur'ān's inimitability see EQ, s.v. Inimitability.

<sup>207</sup> On the *lisān al-ḥāl* see Ritter, *Meer der Seele*, index: sprache des zustandes/Ocean, index: language of states.

in the Prophet's body—blessings and peace be upon him! If they're of a normal degree, the words he speaks at that time aren't divine sayings. If the lights shine and ignite in his body such that he leaves his normal state—blessings and peace be upon him—the words he speaks at that time are the words of God the Sublime. This was his situation—blessings and peace be upon him—when the Qur'ān came down to him. If the lights shine but don't remove him from his [normal] state—blessings and peace be upon him—(118) what he says at that time is called a divine saying.'

And one time he said: 'If the Prophet speaks—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and what he says isn't of his own choosing, this is the Qur'ān. If the words are of his choosing and if at that time extraneous lights shine, this is a divine saying. If the lights are his permanent lights, this is a *ḥadīth* that isn't divine. Because his words were necessarily accompanied by the lights of the True—He is sublime—everything he said—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is revelation which has been revealed. The difference in the circumstances of the lights accounts for the three kinds of speech. But God knows best!'

Then I said: 'This explanation contains great beauty but what's the proof that the divine saying doesn't belong to God's word—He is mighty and glorious?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The word of God the Sublime isn't hidden.' I asked: 'Due to clairvoyance (*kashf*)?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Due to clairvoyance and without clairvoyance. Everyone endowed with reason who listens to the Qur'ān and then listens to something else, perceives the difference without any doubt. The Companions—God be pleased with them—were the people most endowed with reason and they didn't abandon the religion of their fathers without words from God the Sublime that were perfectly clear. If the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—had spoken words similar to the divine sayings, none of the people would have believed. What caused necks to bow in submission was the noble Qur'ān which is the word of God—He is sublime and exalted!'

And I asked him: 'How did they know this was the word of the Lord? After all, they were worshipping idols and they had no previous knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—so as to realize this was His word. The most they could have perceived was that these were words beyond a human being's capacity. But they might have been the words of angels, for instance.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever hears the Qur'ān and applies its meanings to his heart, knows with a compelling

knowledge that this is the Lord's word—He is sublime! The majesty it contains and the authority it bears can only be the majesty of lordliness and the authority of divinity. An intelligent, clever person who hears the words of a sultan in this world and then hears the words of one of his subjects perceives that the sultan's words possess a certain breath by which they're recognizable. This is so to the extent that if we supposed him to be blind and he came to a group of people who were talking and the sultan was lost in their midst and they were talking in turns, he'd distinguish the words of the sultan from those of everyone else and be in no doubt about it. Now such is the case with contingent words in this world. (119) How much more so in the case of eternal words! Thus the Companions—God be pleased with them—knew their Lord—He is mighty and glorious—by means of the Qur'ān and they knew His attributes and what He's entitled to because of His lordliness. Their hearing the Qur'ān with its benefit of certain knowledge about Him—He is mighty and glorious—was the equivalent of direct seeing and vision (*mushāhada*), so that the True—He is sublime—became like a companion. And no one's companion is concealed from him.'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'The words of the Lord—He is sublime—are recognizable because of certain signs. Among these is that they surpass a human being's capacity. Indeed, they surpass all contingent things because His word corresponds to His comprehensive knowledge and corresponds to His decree and His authority. God the Sublime possesses comprehensive knowledge and the effective decree, whereas the contingent (human being) possesses neither comprehensive knowledge nor the effective decree. He, i.e. the contingent, speaks in accordance with his contingent knowledge and his weak authority, both of which are dependent on someone else's power. Indeed, he speaks knowing that he has no power at all. Another of these signs is that God the Sublime's word has a particular breath that isn't found in any other speech, for speech conforms to states of the body. The eternal word emerges and it's accompanied by the power of divinity and the majesty of lordliness. That's why mixed in it are His promises and threats, as well as His glad tidings and a cause for fear. But even if it didn't contain majesty, the mere fact that when He speaks, dominion is His dominion, the countries are His countries, the bondsmen are His bondsmen, the earth His earth, the sky His sky, and the creatures His creatures—and no one disputes this—would be sufficient by itself.

The words of anyone besides Him—He is mighty and glorious—necessarily contain the characteristic of fear. Even if we suppose the



speaker to be among the highest of the intimates, that person's interior is filled with fear of God the Sublime. But God—He is exalted—fears no one. He's majestic and His words are majestic.

Another sign is this. With regard to eternal words, if their contingent letters were removed and their eternal meanings remained, you'd find that they speak to all creation without any distinction of past, present and future. That's because the meaning is eternal and contains no ordered sequence and no division. Whoever's inner sight has been opened by God looks at eternal meaning and finds it has no end. Then he looks at the letters and sees they're like a form which conceals the eternal meaning. If he then removes the form, he sees what has no end, and this is the interior of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān. If he looks at the form, he finds it's confined between the two covers of a book, and this is the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān's exterior. If he listens to recitation (120) of the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān, he sees the eternal meanings motionless in the shadow of the words. This isn't hidden from him, just as things that are perceptible to the sense of sight aren't hidden from him.

Another sign is the distinction established by the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—between his own words and the words of the Lord—He is mighty and glorious! Indeed, he ordered the Companions to write down the Lord's words—He is sublime! And he forbade them to write down anything else from him. Whatever they'd already written down of that he ordered them to erase. It hasn't been established that they wrote down the divine sayings from him. The latter therefore belong to his words and aren't the word of the Lord—He is sublime! Nor do the divine sayings possess any of the three qualities, i.e. surpassing the capacity of a human being and the other things that were mentioned.'

This is some of what we learned from his instruction—God be pleased with him—concerning the difference between these three things. As for his final response, i.e. his statement: 'Everyone endowed with reason who listens to the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān and then listens to something else, perceives the difference without any doubt...' up to the end of what he affirmed, the judge and Imam of the world, Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī<sup>208</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—indicates almost the same thing in his book the *Intiṣār* and he expatiates on this at great length and in this way refutes many claims of the Rāfiḍites<sup>209</sup> regarding what they added to the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān that

<sup>208</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 130, XII; died 403/1013.

<sup>209</sup> Originally a name given to a group of soldiers who deserted Zayd, the grandson of Ḥusayn; then a pejorative term applied to Shī'ites in general; cf. EI, s.v. *Rāfiḍa*.

doesn't belong in it. Consult this book!<sup>210</sup> If not for fear of being tedious, we'd cite his words so you might see them with your own eyes.

When our Shaykh began his response, he caused me to be overcome with amazement—God be pleased with him—for through his own intuition he presented what the above-mentioned Imam says. Then he concluded his response—God be pleased with him—by means of a fifth distinction based on pure clairvoyance, which we haven't written down because it lies beyond what's accessible to reason. But let this be the end of what we wished to record in the present introduction. Now let's commence with our purpose which is to present all that we heard from the sciences of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! And this is contained in the chapters that follow.

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<sup>210</sup> *Intiṣār*, pp. 183 ff.; on this subject see also Brunner, *Koranfälschung*, pp. 2 ff.



## CHAPTER ONE

[1] Pp. 202-05. 'One day he came forth to his Companions with two books in his hands and said: "In this one book are the names of the inhabitants of Paradise...and in the other book are the names of the inhabitants of Hell-fire..." Question: but what register could contain the names of all these people? Answer: the writing is writing accessible to deeper vision, not writing of the pen. Proof of this interpretation is provided by the *ḥadīth*: 'Paradise and Hell-fire were portrayed for me...'

[2] Pp. 205-12. 'This Qurʾān has been sent down upon seven letters.' The seven letters are seven lights which consist of prophethood, apostleship, Adamhood, the spirit, science, contraction and expansion. The sign of each letter's presence in a Qurʾānic verse.

Pp. 212-45. A detailed explanation concerning each letter's seven parts and their relation to the Prophet, this time in the sequence: Adamhood, contraction, expansion, prophethood, the spirit, science and apostleship.

Pp. 245-53. Each letter of the Arabic alphabet possesses one of the previously explained forty-nine parts, as does each of the *litterae productionis* (*alif*, *wāw* and *yāʾ*) which can be lengthened up to six degrees.

Pp. 253-67. The *rasm* of the Qurʾān. What al-Baqillānī says in favor of using various forms of *rasm*. Al-Dabbāgh's insistence that the Qurʾān's *rasm* is fixed and that every apparent irregularity has a secret behind it. Numerous examples.

Pp. 267-70. Relationship of the vowels to the seven 'letters'.

Pp. 270-80. Illustrating the meaning of the *ḥadīth* in question through the example of the *Fātiḥa*.

Pp. 280-91. Interpretation of non-canonical readings of the *Fātiḥa* on the basis of the *ḥadīth*.

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[3] Pp. 307-18. The *ḥadīths* that deal with the true dream, and how many parts of prophethood they say the true dream contains. Views on the matter held by different religious scholars.

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Pp. 319-320. The true dream and the false dream.

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Pp. 337-42. The truth of dreams, their nature and how they occur. *Khawāṭir* and *idrākāt*.

Pp. 342-59. Darkness that enters the body and the ten degrees of darkness. The ten degrees of purity associated with the spirit.

Pp. 359-62. Seeing the Prophet in a dream. He can appear in two hundred and forty-eight thousand images. Different degrees of darkness in a dream in which the Prophet appears. What the science of dream interpretation depends on.

[4] Pp. 363-65. 'Worship God as if you see Him.' Al-Dabbāgh's explanation of this *ḥadīth*.

[5] Pp. 365-67. 'I looked at the sins in my community and I saw no sin greater than when a man is given a Qur'ānic verse and he then forgets it.'

[6] Pp. 367-68. 'Paradise and Hell-fire had an argument...'

[7] Pp. 368-69. 'When at the beginning of revelation Gabriel—peace be upon him—was late in coming...'

[8] Pp. 369-72. 'God the Sublime comes to the believers at the waiting place of the Resurrection in a form they don't recognize and they seek refuge with God from Him...'

[9] Pp. 372-73. 'The heart of God's bondsman is between two fingers of the Compassionate One.'

[10] Pp. 373-74. 'The Black Stone is God's right hand on His earth.'

[11] P. 374. 'Death is brought in the form of a ram and is then sacrificed.'

[12] Pp. 374-79. On the *ḥadīths* that mention the pebbles that glorify God, the yearning of the tree trunk, the stone's greeting, the

prostration of the trees, and other such miracles of the Prophet. Stones and fish speak to al-Dabbāgh outside one of the gates of Fez. He hears bulls speaking to one another.

[13] Pp. 379-81. 'The Israelites said to Moses: "Describe for us the word of the Lord of glory and what it was like to hear it."'

[14] Pp. 381-82. 'Gabriel was only concealed from me this time.'

[15] Pp. 382-86. 'Every prophet was given some [miracles] on the basis of which human beings would acquire faith.'

[16] Pp. 386-87. 'By God, I will not give you mounts to ride and I have nothing with me to give you to ride.'

[17] Pp. 387-90. 'Should I swear an oath but then see something better than it, I renounce my oath and do what's better.'

[18] Pp. 390-92. On the *ḥadīth* about pollinating the palm-trees.

[19] Pp. 392-93. 'When the call to prayer is sounded, Satan takes flight and breaks wind.'

[20] P. 393. '[While] in the presence of (*inda*) my Lord, I didn't want Him to give me food and drink.'

[21] Pp. 393-95. 'I witnessed the birth of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and I saw the house in which his birth took place fill with light...'

[22] P. 395. The month in which the Prophet's birth took place.

[23] P. 396. The year in which his birth took place.

[24] Pp. 396-97. Did the Prophet have hair under his armpits?

[25] P. 397. Were the Prophet's eyebrows joined, and how did he walk?

[26] P. 397. What was his beard like?

[27] P. 398. About the Prophet's hair, and the dye and depilatory paste he used.

[28] Pp. 398-99. How often did the splitting open of the Prophet's chest occur?

[29] P. 399. About his fingers and toes.

[30] Pp. 399-400. Gabriel embraced the Prophet three times. The Prophet's reciting the Qur'ān.

[31] Pp. 400-01. 'There you [all] are this night of yours.'

[32] Pp. 401-02. The import of this *ḥadīth* for the length of time that Companions went on living after the Prophet's death.

[33] P. 402. The Rajrāja are not Companions of the Prophet. There's no Companion in the West.

## (125) CHAPTER ONE

Concerning the *ḥadīths* we questioned him about.

[1]

One of them was the *ḥadīth* transmitted by al-Tirmidhī<sup>1</sup> from °Abd Allāh b. °Amr b. al-°Āṣ<sup>2</sup> who reported:

‘The Prophet of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—came forth to us and he had two books in his hands. He said about the one in his right hand: “This is a book from the Lord of the worlds. It contains the names of the inhabitants of Paradise, with the names of their fathers and their tribes. No one will be added to them, nor will anyone ever be subtracted from them.” Then he said the same thing about the book in his left hand concerning the inhabitants of Hell-fire.

At the end of the *ḥadīth* he said:

‘He spoke with a gesture of his hand and hurled the two books away. Then he said: “Your Lord has finished with His bondsmen. One group is in Paradise, the other group is in Hell-fire.”’<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar says: ‘The *ḥadīth*’s chain of transmission is good.’<sup>4</sup>

But someone found it to be of doubtful authenticity. In his opinion it associates divine omnipotence with what’s inconceivable, by putting all the names of the inhabitants of Paradise in a book which the Prophet could hold in his hand—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And the same is true for the names of the inhabitants of Hell-fire.

Here’s the text of his question. Indeed, he asked al-Dabbāgh a number of questions, one of which was: ‘Oh Sayyidī, it’s a tenet of the scholars of speculative theology (*kalām*) that divine omnipotence is associated with things that are possible, not with the inconceivable. Yet the following has come down in a *ḥadīth* from the Chosen One:

(126) “One day he came forth to his Companions with two books in his hands and said: ‘In this one book are the names of the inhabitants of Paradise, with the names of their fathers and the

<sup>1</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 133, XXI; he died 279/892.

<sup>2</sup> *A’lām* IV, p. 111; died 65/684.

<sup>3</sup> *Concordance* V, p. 534; indicates al-Tirmidhī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal.

<sup>4</sup> Not found in the *Faṭḥ*.

names of their tribes and their families, and in the other book are the names of the inhabitants of Hell-fire along with their fathers, their tribes and their families.”

And this despite the small size of the two books! What we have here is citing the small for the large without diminishing the large or magnifying the small. For, really, what register could contain the names of [all] these people? This is the strongest proof of the rational impossibility of inserting what's spacious into what's narrow—if one wishes to do this while keeping unchanged the smallness of the one object and the largeness of the other. But the person reporting this, as mentioned at the beginning of the question, is the infallible one [Muḥammad] who “doesn't speak on the basis of arbitrary whims” (53/3).<sup>1</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘What the theologians and the people of the Sunna and the Community say—God be pleased with them—is sound doctrine. It isn't possible for there to be something in the behavior of the Friends of God and in the evidentiary miracles of the apostles (*mu'jizāt al-risāla*) which is inconceivable to the human mind. Of course, both contain things which the mind falls short of grasping. But if the mind is given right guidance concerning the intended meaning, it accepts it and submits to it. Now the writing referred to in these two books is writing accessible to sight (*naẓar*), not writing of the pen. Thus, if someone with deeper vision (*baṣīra*), especially the chief of the first and the last, our lord and master Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—turns his attention to something in order to see it, his deeper vision penetrates the veils between himself and the object of his sight so that the light of both [i.e. that of the object and of his sight] reaches him and he grasps it. If the image of the seen object occurs in his deeper vision and we suppose this vision to be perfect, its effect (*ḥukm*) then transfers to the eyes and the eyes also come to possess the power it possesses. The eyes then see the image depicted on whatever stands before them. If what they encounter is a wall, they see the image on the wall and if what they see is his hand, they see the image on his hand. If what they see is paper, they see the image on paper. In the same way one can understand the *ḥadīth*:

“Paradise and Hell-fire were portrayed for me on the surface of this wall.”



That was because the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—concentrated on them with his deeper vision while he was performing the prayer of the eclipse (*ṣalāt al-kusūf*).<sup>5</sup> This penetrated to his eyes, and what they had in front of them was the surface of the wall. He then saw the image of both things—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! This is also how the *ḥadīth* about (127) the two books is to be understood. The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—concentrated on Paradise with his inner vision and its image occurred to his eyes. What they had in front of them was the book that was in his right hand. He began—blessings and peace be upon him—to look at the image of Paradise and its inhabitants in that body which was in his right hand, and then he said:

“This is a book from the Lord of the worlds. It contains the names of the inhabitants of Paradise, with the names of their fathers and their tribes.”

If there’s a difficulty in understanding the *ḥadīth*: “Paradise and Hell-fire were portrayed for me”, then this *ḥadīth* as well contains a difficulty. If there’s no difficulty in it, then this one contains no difficulty either. The difficulty arises from taking the writing to be writing produced by a pen. If it were here a question of writing with a pen, the end of the *ḥadīth* would present a contradiction, for it says: “...he hurled them both away”, i.e. the two books—meaning he cast them and threw them away! But how would the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—throw away a book that came from the Lord of the worlds and contained the names of His elect and His apostles (*rusul*) and the best of His creation, since the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—more than anyone in creation was given to glorifying God and His apostles and His angels. The image which occurred in the body was called writing because of its resemblance to writing in so far as it indicates something exterior, since writing can also be applied on the exterior. Indeed, the word *kitāba* (writing) is derived from gathering (*al-jamʿ*) and whatever is gathered together (*majmūʿ*) is also said to be recorded (*maktūb*). Thus squadrons of war are called *katāʾib* because of their being gathered in groups (*takattub*) and assembled (*ijtimāʿ*). And the singular is *katība*, i.e. recorded (*maktūba*) and assembled (*majmūʿa*) and included in other squadrons (*katāʾib*).

<sup>5</sup> This is a special prayer (*ṣalāt*) to be performed on the occasion of an eclipse of the sun or moon; see EI, s.v. *ṣalāt*.

The writing (*kitāba*) in question is ascribed to the Lord of the worlds because the light that causes the occurrence of the image, which is here expressed by the book, is beyond what the bondsman can bear and not something he can acquire. It's a Lordly assistance and a light from God the Sublime. What has emerged from this is that the meaning of "writing" (*kitāba*) is the image that occurs in the sight (*naẓar*) and nothing else. That it occurs in the sight isn't difficult to understand, as is the case with all visible things in the sight. The pupil of the eye, despite its smallness, has huge images depicted in it (128) such as the image of the sky—and the pupil is even smaller than a lentil. Thus the *ḥadīth* belongs to the category of things that are possible, and the same is true of all the evidentiary miracles and supernatural events. But God knows best!

## [2]

And I asked him more than once—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of the Prophet's words—God's blessings and peace be upon him:

'This Qur'ān has been sent down upon seven letters (*aḥruf*).'

He replied with several answers—God be pleased with him! And yet my soul went on longing for the unequivocal answer. What caused the difficulty is the following. Whereas the word *ḥarf* is clear linguistically and contains no such difficulty as exists with regard to the opening letters (*fawātiḥ*) of certain surahs, despite this linguistic clarity the religious scholars greatly disagree in their opinions about it. Anyone who studies the problem only experiences greater confusion and difficulty. On the other hand, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—only intended one meaning.

The matter of this controversy, which has produced up to forty different explanations, generates [further] ambiguity and obscurity about the *ḥadīth*. Indeed, a plethora of explanations about something results in ignorance, and it may well be that the Prophet's meaning—God's blessings and peace be upon him—isn't contained in any of the explanations.

Furthermore, the said *ḥadīth* is transmitted from more than one of the Companions—God be pleased with them! We may mention

°Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb,<sup>6</sup> Hishām b. Ḥakīm,<sup>7</sup> Ubayy b. Ka°b,<sup>8</sup> °Abd al-Raḥmān b. °Awf,<sup>9</sup> °Uthmān b. °Affān,<sup>10</sup> °Umar b. Abī Salama,<sup>11</sup> Abū Juhaym,<sup>12</sup> Samura b. Jundab,<sup>13</sup> °Amr b. al-°Āṣ,<sup>14</sup> and Umm Ayyūb al-Anṣāriyya,<sup>15</sup> as well as others among the Companions—God be pleased with them all! And Abū Ya°lā al-Mawṣilī, in his *al-Musnad al-kabīr*,<sup>16</sup> reports: “°Uthmān b. °Affān—God be pleased with him—mounted the pulpit as preacher and said: “In the name of God I implore every man to stand up who heard the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—say the following *ḥadīth*:

‘This Qur°ān has been sent down upon seven letters, and each one of them for a particular concern.’”

(129) Then on all sides the Companions stood up until their number couldn’t be counted, and each one said: “I heard him say it!” And °Uthmān added: “I too heard him say it!” For this reason Abū °Ubayd<sup>17</sup> and other memorizers of *ḥadīths* maintain: ‘It’s one of the *ḥadīths* that have been handed down with multiple chains of transmission (*mutawātir*).’ Thus, in the distant past and more recently, religious scholars—God be pleased with them—have been engaged in discussing it and some like Abū Shāma<sup>18</sup> have composed works that deal with it exclusively.

The best commentaries I’ve seen on it are those by four highly eminent scholars.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. EI s.n.

<sup>7</sup> *A°lām* VIII, p. 85; died after 15/636.

<sup>8</sup> *A°lām* I, p. 82; died 21/642.

<sup>9</sup> *A°lām* III, p. 321; died 32/652.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. EI s.n.

<sup>11</sup> *Usd* IV, p. 183, no. 3830; died 83/702.

<sup>12</sup> *Usd* VI, pp. 59 f., no. 5775 or 5776.

<sup>13</sup> *A°lām* III, p. 139; *Wāfi* XV, p. 454, no. 611; died 59/679.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. EI s.n.

<sup>15</sup> *Usd* VII, p. 304, no. 7364.

<sup>16</sup> GAS I, p. 170; the *ḥadīth* isn’t found in Abū Ya°lā; see *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* III, p. 159, which comments on Abū Ya°lā, *Musnad* IX, pp. 82 f., no. 5149.

<sup>17</sup> GAS IX, p. 70; died 224/839; ‘Ibriziana’, p. 131, XIII; *Gharīb al-ḥadīth* III, pp. 159-62. But Abū °Ubayd says (ibid. III, p. 160, l. 9): *li-annahū shādhdh ghayr musnad*.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Ibriziana’, p. 131, XIV; died 665/1268; see also here p. 187.

The first one is the spokesman of the speculative theologians (*mutakallimūn*), the judge Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, in *Kitāb al-Intiṣār*<sup>19</sup> where he treats the subject at length.<sup>20</sup>

The second is the great *ḥāfiẓ* and imam, Ibn al-Jazarī, in his book the *Nashr*,<sup>21</sup> and in this work he classifies the explanations in ten chapters and deals with the names of the Companions who transmitted the *ḥadīth* from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

The third is the *ḥāfiẓ* and commander of the believers in *ḥadīth* studies, the imam Ibn Ḥajar, in the *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* in the chapter *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*.<sup>22</sup>

And the fourth is the imam and *ḥāfiẓ*, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, in the *Kitāb al-Itqān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*<sup>23</sup> where he classifies the explanations of the *ḥadīth* in forty categories.

Despite having studied the commentaries of these four highly eminent scholars and my knowledge of the outer and the inner, (130) the first and the last, of what they have to say, I, al-Lamaṭī, hadn’t acquired an opinion (*ẓann*) about what the Prophet meant—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—but rather I remained in doubt about precisely what he intended.

Then I said to our Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘I only wish to ask you about what the Prophet meant—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘I’ll give you an answer tomorrow—if God is willing!’ When it was the next day, he said to me—God be pleased with him—and what he said is true:

‘I asked the Prophet what he meant in this *ḥadīth* and he explained his meaning to me—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’ For three days I discussed this with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and he clarified the *ḥadīth*’s meaning for me. I then understood that the *ḥadīth* is of great importance and I heard indescribable secrets about it such as can’t be sustained [by the mind].

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<sup>19</sup> See p. 196, fn. 208.

<sup>20</sup> *Intiṣār*, pp. 207 ff.

<sup>21</sup> See p. 190, fn. 202; *Nashr* I, pp. 19 ff.

<sup>22</sup> *Faṭḥ* X, pp. 27 ff., no. 4991.

<sup>23</sup> *Itqān* I, pp. 45 ff.; and see here p. xvi, fn. 41.

The following is a summary of what can be written down on this subject:

‘In the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—there’s a power with which his noble body (*dhāt*) has been imbued. The lights of this power are divided into seven kinds (*awjuh*). And these seven lights possess two directions. The one goes from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—to the True—He is exalted! And the other goes from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—to creation. The power in the first direction is forever overflowing; it never subsides and never slackens. If God the Sublime wishes to send down the Qur’ān to His Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—He sends down the verse and with it some of the light of the first direction for example, not all of it since this light never slackens and never subsides in the direction of God the Sublime. Only a part of it appears in the direction of creation. Then He sends down another verse—He is exalted—and with it part of the light of the second kind. Then a third verse and with it part of the third light, and so on.’

And I asked: ‘What are these seven lights which are referred to as the seven letters (*aḥruf*)?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘They consist of the letter of prophethood (*al-nubuwwa*), the letter of apostleship (*al-risāla*), the letter of Adamhood (*al-ādamiyya*), the letter of the spirit (*al-rūḥ*), the letter of science (*al-‘ilm*), the letter of contraction (*al-qabḍ*), and the letter of expansion (*al-bast*).

Now the sign of the letter of **prophethood** is that the verse [sent down] commands patience, indicates the truth, and causes disdain for the world and its lusts. Indeed, the nature of prophethood is an inclination for the truth and its advocacy, as well as pointing it out and recommending it.

(131) The sign of the letter of **apostleship** is that the verse deals with the realm of the hereafter, its degrees and the stations of its inhabitants, and mention of their reward and other similar matters.

The content of the letter of **Adamhood** belongs to the light which God placed in the body of Adam’s offspring, enabling them to possess human speech and thereby distinguishing their speech from that of the angels and the Jinn and all who can speak. It has entered with these seven [letters], despite its existence in every human being, for in the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—it

reached the ultimate sanctity and purity, due to his body's perfection in sanctity and purity, a perfection beyond which none higher exists and which can only exist in his body—God's blessings and peace be upon him! In sum, because this light which conveys human speech was accompanied in the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—by the light of prophethood, apostleship, the spirit, science, contraction and expansion, it possessed the greatest perfection due to the support his body received from the light of the other six. Thus the verses began to come down to him and not one verse from God the Sublime's Book lacked this light in it, since the Qur'ān's words are human.

And the sign of the letter of the **spirit** is that the verse is connected with the True—He is sublime—and with His attributes, and in it there's no mention of anything created, for the spirit is forever beholding the True and when a verse of this description comes down, it's accompanied by light of the spirit.

The sign of the letter of **science** is that the verse deals with the circumstances of creatures of the past such as reports about ʿĀd<sup>24</sup> and Thamūd, the people of Noah, Hūd and Šāliḥ, and so on. Or it points out that certain views are blameworthy, as in God the Sublime's words:

“Those who purchase error with right guidance, but their transaction bears no profit and they are not rightly guided” (2/16).

In sum, [exemplary] tales, admonitions, wise sayings and suchlike emerge upon the letter of science.'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'The light of this letter casts out a person's ignorance and it makes him (132) a knower [of God] capable of imparting knowledge. Even if one supposes a person born on a high mountain who never associates with anyone and is left to grow up there... If he's then brought to a city and God provides him with the light of this letter, a man who's occupied his whole life with religious science (*ʿilm*) won't be capable of speaking with him about any single subject.

And the sign of the letter of **contraction** is that the verse addresses the people of unbelief and darkness. One time you see Him summon them in the verse and another time He threatens them, as in His words—He is exalted:

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<sup>24</sup> See pp. 413 ff.

“In their hearts is an illness and God increases their illness. They will suffer painful punishment because of their having lied” (2/10).

This is because the army of light and the army of darkness are forever at war. If the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—turns toward darkness, contraction comes over him, and what was just mentioned in the Qur’ānic verses is to be understood in terms of that contraction.

The sign of the letter of **expansion** is that you see that the verse deals with God the Sublime’s benefits to mankind and enumerates them. If the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—turns toward God the Sublime’s benefits to mankind, the Prophet experiences expansion. The verse then comes forth from the station of expansion.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is, roughly speaking, the characteristic sign of every one of the letters. Otherwise, in each of these letters there are three hundred and sixty-six aspects. If I were to explain these aspects in every letter and clarify them in every verse, the interior of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—would appear to people with the clarity of the sun, but that’s a secret of the kind which must be kept hidden. Whoever has received a great illumination from God knows this secret. Whoever hasn’t received illumination should be left as he is.’

I, al-Lamāṭī, said: ‘The *ḥadīths* transmitted on this subject indicate that the meaning of the seven letters (*ahṛuf*) has to do with how to pronounce the words of the Qur’ān, as for instance what ‘Umar says—God be pleased with him: “I heard Hishām b. Ḥakīm recite the Qur’ān according to ways of reciting (*‘alā ḥurūf*) which the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—didn’t teach me.” And the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said the recitations of both ‘Umar (133) and Hishām were correct: “This Qur’ān has been sent down upon seven letters. Recite it the way that’s easy for you.”

But the letters you mention are interior attributes and Lordly lights in the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! It’s not possible that ‘Umar and Hishām disagreed about these, so that the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—answered them that the Qur’ān was sent down upon these letters.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Differences about pronunciation in the *ḥadīths* that treat this subject constitute a branch

of the different interior lights. If one pronounces letters without a vowel (*taskīn*) and pronounces final *u* (*rafʿ*), this comes from contraction (*qabḍ*). If one pronounces a final syllable with *a* (*naṣb*), this comes from the letters of apostleship. Pronunciation of a final *i* (*khafḍ*) comes from the letters of Adamhood. For every verse there's a special illumination and a known experience (*dhawq*).<sup>7</sup>

When I heard these light-filled words from him, I took the initiative to recite the *Fātiḥa* for him and a portion of the surah *The Cow*. I heard from him an explanation of the above divisions which dazzled me. I repeated the recitation and I recited according to the seven methods, i.e. that of Nāfi<sup>25</sup>, Ibn Kathīr,<sup>26</sup> Abū ʿAmr b. al-ʿAlāʾ al-Baṣrī,<sup>27</sup> Ibn ʿĀmir,<sup>28</sup> ʿĀṣim,<sup>29</sup> Ḥamza<sup>30</sup> and Kisāʾī.<sup>31</sup> And I heard a marvel most marvelous regarding this. (134) I saw that the difference in the seven methods of reciting is based on the different interior lights. (135) What I'd been seeking for some twenty years concerning the meaning of this *ḥadīth* became clear to me—praise be to God Who dispenses benefits! And before me (136) the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn al-Jawzī<sup>32</sup> had sought it for some thirty years, and an explanation of the *ḥadīth*'s meaning had appeared to him. Moreover, he mentions (138) he found it in another author. Indeed, the author of the *Intiṣār* [al-Bāqillānī] referred to above elaborates on this explanation but he confines himself to the differences in pronunciation without dealing with these interior lights which cause the pronunciation to differ. (139) In sum, this explanation as well as others that have been expressed by people concerning the *ḥadīth* amount to clinging to the shadow of the tree. The explanation that our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—heard from the Possessor of Revelation—God's blessings and peace be upon him—contains mention of the tree as well as its capillaries, roots and branches, and everything that arises from them.

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25 GAS I, p. 9; died 169/785.

26 GAS I, p. 7; died 120/738.

27 GAS I, p. 9; died 154/770.

28 GAS I, p. 6; died 118/736.

29 GAS I, p. 6; died 118/736.

30 GAS I, p. 9; died 156/773.

31 GAS I, p. 9; died 189/804.

32 On him see p. 188, fn. 185.



And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘If I wished to fill seven notebooks with dictation on this subject, I could do so. But the barrier referred to above [need for secrecy] restrains me.’

.....

I’d heard in his explanation of the divisions that in a Qur’ānic verse there are some parts of prophethood, for example, and some parts of apostleship, and so on, until he went through all seven letters. I said: ‘You must explain for us what “parts” means in the case of these seven letters, and then clarify for us the way the [ordinary] letters are divided among them, so our benefit is complete.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Every one of the seven letters has seven parts. The letter of Adamhood has seven, that of prophethood seven, that of apostleship seven, that of the spirit seven, that of contraction seven, that of expansion seven, and that of science seven. All of them taken together come to forty-nine.

As for **Adamhood**: the first of its parts is perfection of the creaturely beauty of the external form. This entails possessing the most marvelous and beautiful face, hands, feet, fingers and other limbs, and all else that the form displays, such as whiteness in its beauty and purity, etc.

The second is perfection of benefits from the external body (*dhāt*), such as the five senses: hearing is absolutely perfect, sight is absolutely perfect, smell is absolutely perfect, taste is absolutely perfect, and touch is absolutely perfect. Likewise, the voice and the articulation of sounds (*hurūf*) are absolutely perfect and have attained the ultimate degree of eloquence and clarity.

The third is perfection of the creaturely beauty of the internal form, so that the heart is endowed with its most marvelous shape and its most beautiful state, and the liver has its perfect contours, (140) the brain is the best it can be, the blood vessels are in a state of balance, and so on, until you go through all the internal organs, and every one of them is perfect.

The fourth is perfection of inner beauty such that one’s religious obligations (*taklīf*)<sup>33</sup> are sweet and the perception of divine unicity is absolutely perfect.

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<sup>33</sup> Instead of *takyīf* read *taklīf* which is found in most MSS but rejected by the editor.

The fifth is masculinity which is part of the perfection of Adamhood, as it contains the secret of action (*fiʿl*), whereas femininity contains the secret of passivity (*infiʿāl*). This is because God—He is mighty and powerful—created Adam for Himself—He is sublime—but He created all [other] things for Adam, and among the things are women. When God created the things for Adam, He gave him the secret of action and made him deputy (*khalīfa*) and has passed this on to Adam’s offspring to the end of time.

The sixth is the removal of Satan’s allotment from the body. In this way Adamhood became perfected, and therefore the angels split open the Prophet’s chest—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and removed what they removed from his heart, washed it the way they washed it, and filled it with faith and wisdom.

The seventh is perfection of reason by its attaining the extreme of purity and the ultimate of knowledge.

Now these are the seven which we designate approximately as the parts of Adamhood. Its parts aren’t found in a perfection beyond which there’s no perfection, except in the body (*dhāt*) of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

As for **contraction**: the first of its parts is a sense organ found in the body and which pervades all its substances. Because of it the body, in all its substances, experiences pleasure in what’s good, the way a man delights in the sweetness of honey. And the body, in all its substances, experiences pain from what’s bad, the way a man is displeased by the bitterness of a colocynth, etc.

The second is justice (*inṣāf*). It’s one of the parts of contraction and contraction can only become perfect through justice. Here we’re talking about luminous contraction. If it weren’t accompanied by justice, it would be gloom-laden contraction. And it would cause its possessor to suffer the wrath of God—He is mighty and glorious!

(141) The third is aversion to the opposite. And it avoids it, the way all opposites avoid each other, and doesn’t unite with it, just as white doesn’t unite with black, and standing doesn’t unite with sitting.

The fourth is lack of shame in speaking the truth. He tells the truth even though it be bitter. Blame from an accuser has no effect on him because of his relationship with God.

The fifth is obeying the commands [of God] because we’re talking about luminous contraction. If contraction contains opposition to

divine law, it's gloom-laden and brings down on its possessor God's loathing—He is mighty and glorious!

The sixth is an absolute inclination for its own kind so that due to this it takes on the qualities of its like. If the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—hears someone say: "God is Truth and He's our Creator and our Provider. He's unique and has no partner in His dominion..." and suchlike, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is inclined to these words and loves them to the extent that his limbs dissolve and he takes on the qualities of the secret behind these words. Then his noble body is permeated with the light that emerged with them. Just as he had perfect aversion to the opposite, he possessed perfect inclination for his own kind.

The seventh is perfect power of concentration such that if he concentrates on something, nothing escapes him, not even the paring of a fingernail. If in the realm of sense perceptions a person were to concentrate on ten things, for instance, and one of them escaped him, he wouldn't possess perfect power of concentration. But if nothing escapes him, he possesses perfect power in this domain. It's the same with someone who concentrates on one thing. If he doesn't persist in it, the power of his concentration on it isn't perfect. If he does persist in it, his power over it is perfect. As mentioned above, one of the parts of contraction is inclination for one's own kind and taking on its qualities. To take on its qualities the power of concentration is necessary. The same holds true for another of its parts: aversion to the opposite. In this as well the power of concentration is necessary in order for him to persist in his aversion.

(142) As for **expansion**: the first of its parts is perfect joy and this is a light in the interior which drives off from its possessor resentment, jealousy, pride, avarice and enmity toward people. Those characteristics are incompatible with joy. When the light of faith is found in the body along with this joy, it descends over the joy as if by way of kinship and harmony, and occupies a firm place in the body as is befitting. It's like rain that falls on good ground from which blameless character traits then arise.

The second is the settling of good in the body with the exclusion of evil. And this is a light that causes the good to become the natural disposition and character of its possessor. You see that this person loves the good and loves good people, and his thought only revolves

around matters connected with good. If a person does good to him, he never forgets that person. On the other hand, if a person does something bad to him and causes him harm, for the rest of his life he forgets him and doesn't think about him. If you examine him afterwards you'll find his heart is unconcerned with the matter. He's at peace and happy like someone who hasn't suffered any harm. This is characteristic of the perfection of expansion.

The third is the opening (*fath*) of the external senses, and this consists of a pleasure that occurs in the external senses because of the opening of the arteries in the senses. These arteries take on the qualities of what the senses perceive and by means of this pleasure expansion becomes perfect. Thus in the sight there's a pleasure due to which an inclination occurs for beautiful forms. From this arises love and inward devotion to what one has beheld. And in the hearing is a pleasure due to which one experiences submission while listening to beautiful voices and harmonious melodies. From this may arise agitation and a swinging motion in the body. And so it is with the other senses. In every sense there's a pleasure greater than that of simple perception.

The difference between the opening of the external senses which constitutes one of the parts of expansion, and the perfection of the external senses which is one of the parts of Adamhood, is that the opening of the senses, by opening the previously mentioned arteries, goes beyond the latter perfection. Opening the arteries entails greater perception than occurs in perfection of the senses. Because of this opening of the arteries and their taking on qualities which attracts the person concerned, devotion to what's been (143) perceived occurs. You see him devote himself to the object of his sight with each glance. He may experience a light absence due to this devotion, in contrast to general perception where he doesn't experience this devotion. And how many people behold beautiful things without their being moved by them! And how many others hear beautiful voices without it making an impression on them! But by means of this opening and taking on of qualities perfection of expansion occurs.

The fourth is the opening of the interior senses. Everything that's already been said about opening the external senses by opening the arteries, their taking on the qualities of what the senses perceived, and the person's devotion because of this to what was perceived, is

all true about the opening of the interior senses. The previously mentioned difference between this opening and the perfection of the interior senses also holds true here as well.

The fifth is the station of elevation. This is that the person who's been ornamented with the parts of Adamhood, and then been ornamented with the parts of contraction, and then with the four parts of expansion, knows the value of what he's been given and that these qualities are only awarded for something great. He knows that he's of elevated rank and great station with his Lord—He is mighty and glorious! And the great man only occupies his attention with lofty matters and virtuous character traits. God the Sublime has said:

“We have honored Adam's offspring” (17/70). And God the Sublime has said: “Verily, We created man in the most beautiful form” (95/4).

And if he knows he's of great rank and elevated station, his expansion has become perfect. For this reason the station of elevation belongs to the parts of expansion.

The sixth is noble forgiveness. For he pardons whoever has wronged him and passes over whoever has done him harm. Indeed, noble forgiveness belongs to the parts of expansion because we're talking about expansion which is luminous, not about expansion which is gloom-laden. In dealing with the parts of expansion earlier, the station of elevation was already mentioned, to the effect that it consists of elevation of rank and high standing. Now if noble forgiveness accompanies this elevation, the expansion is luminous. But if it's accompanied by wickedness and oppression, it's gloom-laden. God's wrath—He is mighty and glorious—will overtake such a person. Thus it's clear that noble forgiveness belongs to true luminous expansion and to its indispensable parts.

(144) The seventh is “lowering the wing of humility” (17/24), and the reason for its inclusion among the parts of expansion was given above in connection with noble forgiveness. Since the possessor of expansion occupies an elevated rank, he must display humility and self-abasement toward his peers who accompany him in this state. If he elevates himself above them, pride will enter into his expansion, and the wrath of God—He is mighty and glorious—will overtake him.

Know that Adamhood and its parts, contraction and its parts, and expansion and its parts, as found in the Prophet—God's blessings

and peace be upon him—are also found in others, even in non-Muslims. However, in the Prophet's case—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he's been distinguished with an Adamhood than which none is higher outwardly. And the removal of Satan's allotment, which belongs to the parts of Adamhood, refers to the removal previously mentioned in the splitting open of his noble chest. As for someone other than the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—these parts may be found in him at a certain degree of perfection but not at the highest degrees. Here removal, which belongs to the parts of Adamhood, means the removal of baseness and insolence from the body so the person involved won't be wicked and known for a bad disposition. What isn't meant is the removal of the clot of blood itself as mentioned earlier in the splitting open of the chest, for this is a distinction reserved for the rank of prophethood.

And as for contraction: the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is distinguished in this regard by the highest degree of luminous contraction.

Now when it comes to someone other than the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—if he pursues his path progressing along his way, his contraction will be luminous and he'll attain one of the degrees of perfection, not the furthest degree of perfection. The furthest degree belongs to the distinctions of prophethood. If, on the other hand, he offends against the *sharī'a*, his contraction will be gloom-laden. Then the sense organ mentioned earlier as the first part of contraction will be the opposite of the way it was previously described. This will cause him to experience pleasure in wickedness and feel pain in the good. The second part which is justice will be eliminated from him. Indeed, if he experiences pleasure in wickedness and pain in the good, justice is impossible for him. Justice is only possible on the part of someone who feels pleasure in the good and pain in wickedness. And the third part which is aversion to the opposite is reversed in him so that he feels aversion to the good. The same is true for the other parts, i.e. they're reversed in (145) gloom-laden contraction.

Now if every one of the parts is the reverse of what has just been described, that's gloom-laden contraction which occurs among the rebellious, infidel satans. We beseech God for protection against it! This is why when they beheld the Prophet's evidentiary miracles—

blessings and peace be upon him—their rebellion and unbelief simply increased. If only some of the parts are reversed, this is contraction such as is widespread among the believers.

When it comes to expansion, the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—is distinguished by the highest degree of luminous expansion. In this regard, other persons are as in the explanation about contraction previously given.

Luminous expansion has among its parts noble forgiveness and “lowering the wing of humility”, whereas in gloom-laden expansion both of these are eliminated as already described. But God knows best!

As for **prophethood**: the first of its parts is telling the truth and this arises from a light in the body which imposes truthful speech on the body so it becomes a person’s nature and disposition. Such a person won’t abandon it even if it causes conflict with friends, separation from homelands, indeed even if it leads to the chopping off of heads. The polytheists had asked the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—to go back on his word and they tempted him to do this with every trick but he refused and wouldn’t do so. Then they manifested hostility toward him and, as it were, [joined ranks and] shot at him with a single bow. But this only increased his steadfastness and resolution. For his noble body has been imbued with telling the truth and nothing else is conceivable in its case.’

Then al-Dabbāgh related two stories—God be pleased with him:

The first is: ‘In some non-Arab country there are trained birds above the door of the house and if a thief enters, the birds break into speech and say: “They’ve committed theft” (*saraqū*), and they pronounce the *qāf* like an *alif*. The bird won’t stop speaking even in the face of threats and menacing gestures, nor will it cease if offered something to eat. In short, it won’t cease even if it’s [about to be] killed.’<sup>34</sup>

(146) With this story the Shaykh indicates what it means to speak the truth and that the good can be taught because the bird, despite its remoteness [from man], was trained so that true speech became its nature. What then of the case of Adam’s offspring and what of the believers?

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<sup>34</sup> A similar story occurs in Ibn al-Dawādārī, *Kanz* I, p. 214, ll. 13-15; and cf. *Weltgeschichte*, p. 428.

The second story is: ‘A certain disciple said to his shaykh: “Point out something for me, oh Sayyidi, that will give me peace with God—He is mighty and glorious!” The shaykh replied: “If that’s what you want, be like Him in some part of His attributes—He is mighty and glorious! For if you adopt something from His attributes, on the Day of Resurrection He’ll install you among His Friends in the house of His felicity, and He won’t install you with His enemies in the house of His Hell-fire.” The disciple said: “Oh Sayyidi, how can I do this? His attributes are unlimited—He is exalted!” The shaykh replied: “Be like Him in some part of them.” He asked: “Which then, oh Sayyidi?” He said: “Be among those who speak the truth, for speaking the truth is one of His attributes—He is exalted! God will have mercy on you, if you’re among those who speak the truth.” The disciple promised the shaykh he’d speak the truth, and they then parted company.

In the disciple’s neighborhood there was a girl. Satan intervened between them so that the disciple behaved immorally with the girl and deflowered her. The girl was unable to endure, though it was she who proposed the matter to him. She knew a woman’s loss of virginity can’t be kept secret. She informed her father and he brought the disciple before the judge, declaring: “This fellow did such-and-such with my daughter.” The judge said to the disciple: “Do you hear what he says?” “It’s true”, he replied. “That’s what I did.” He had in mind the promise he made the shaykh when they parted and was incapable of evasion and denial. When the judge heard this from him, he said: “The fellow’s an idiot. Take him to the asylum. No sane person admits what harms himself.” So he entered the asylum. But someone came and aroused the judge’s sympathy and interceded for the disciple. In the end they let him go.’

With this story the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—points out that telling the truth always has a favorable result. But God knows best!<sup>35</sup>

‘The second part of prophethood is patience. This is a light in the body which operates within God’s essence—He is mighty and glorious—to reject the feeling of pain and the afflictions that befall the body. This is true patience which (147) is effortless for its possessor because his reason has expanded due to the breadth of his

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<sup>35</sup> From the words seven paragraphs above: ‘As for **prophethood**...’ cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 105, l. -11 to p. 106, l. 8.



thought, while his body is illuminated (*maftūh* ‘*alayhā*) and its reason moves freely within God the Sublime’s limitless perfections. If the body does experience some pain, the things that occupy its thought distract it from the pain.

It once happened to one of the greatest godly men, indeed the Pivot of his age, that four men entered his house to kill him unjustly, and the said Friend of God had a number of children. The four men evicted him from his house where he’d been with his family and children, and began dragging him about. His children raised a tumult and wept. But the men didn’t stop until they’d murdered him. All the while the godly man remained engaged with his own thoughts and preoccupations. He paid no attention to what was happening to him, nor to his children’s weeping and the shouting of his women. This is a wondrous form of patience one scarcely ever hears about. Now if the Friends of God in the Prophet’s religious community—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—are like this, how great must be the patience of the Prophet himself—blessings and peace be upon him!

However, if the body is veiled (*mahjūba*), the light of the reason remains gathered within the body and confined there. If something descends on the body which causes it harm, the body feels it very intensely, so that if you took a branding iron and cauterized this person with it, he would experience it like a hundred branding irons. On the other hand, were you to cauterize an illuminated person, either he wouldn’t feel it at all, as in the case of the Friend of God just mentioned, or he wouldn’t feel it very intensely.

The third part is mercy. This is a light that resides in the body and requires pity and compassion for other creatures. It arises from the mercy which God—He is mighty and glorious—displays for His bondsman. The degree of God’s mercy for a particular bondsman determines the extent of the latter’s mercy for his fellow bondsmen. Nor is there any doubt that among God’s creatures—He is mighty and glorious—no one received as much divine mercy as the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! That’s why nothing equals the Prophet’s mercy for mankind—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and no one overtakes him in this. His mercy—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—has advanced so far that it encompasses the translunar and the sublunar world, as well as the people of this world and the world to come. In His Qur’ānic

verse: "Piteous and compassionate toward the believers" (9/128), (148) God—He is mighty and glorious—indicates four things:

One of them is the light with which all created things are imbued when God is content with them—He is mighty and glorious!

The second is that this light is close to Him—He is mighty and glorious—and by close we mean closeness in rank and status, not closeness of place.

The third is that this light which is close to Him—He is mighty and glorious—is completely and entirely in the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

The fourth is that the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—can support this light and is able to bear it without experiencing discomfort and difficulty. This is the perfection by which our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—surpasses all creatures. The way the verse indicates these four meanings is one of the secrets which must be kept hidden, and there are still other meanings which the verse indicates. But God knows best!

And the fourth part of prophethood is knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—in accordance with how knowledge of Him should be.

The fifth part is complete fear of God—He is mighty and glorious! This consists of a mixture of internal, primary fear, as found in all bodies, with external fear caused by reason and external knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious! Indeed, internal fear exists throughout the whole body and dominates all its individual substances. For there isn't any substance that hasn't been created by God—He is mighty and glorious! And what's created fears its Lord with the kind of fear the contingent feels toward the eternal. This fear is found in all creatures, whether they're endowed with speech or mute, as God the Sublime has said:

"Then He raised Himself up to the sky which was of smoke and He said to it and to the earth: 'Come, whether willingly or unwillingly!' And they replied: 'We will come willingly'" (41/11).

Now the cause of these words is primary, internal fear. And from this fear arises the glorification referred to in God the Sublime's words: "There is nothing that does not praise Him, declaring He is sublime" (17/44).

(149) The dominant characteristic of this fear is permanence and continuity at all moments. As for external fear, its cause is turning one's attention to God—He is mighty and glorious! As long as this attention continues, fear will occur. But if something else distracts one's thought, the attention will disappear and fear will cease. When God the Sublime has mercy on someone, He removes the veil that exists between the person and this true primary, internal fear that persists. For him the fear is made external, permanent, pure and cleansed of murkiness. In these circumstances his fear becomes supported by his knowledge of his Lord—He is mighty and glorious! In this way his fear becomes infinite because his knowledge of his Lord is infinite. Fear supported by such knowledge is limitless. In sum, the external draws purity and permanence from the internal, while the internal draws increase and superabundance from the external. Now this is complete fear. The interior draws increase from the external because fear in the interior is of equal proportions with regard to all bodies. External fear, however, varies with regard to bodies. This is because what causes it is knowledge and people vary in their degree of knowledge. But God knows best!

The sixth is hatred of the false. And it arises from a light that resides permanently in the body. Its concern is to concentrate attention on the category darkness and visualize it until it manifests itself. Then it confronts it with rejection, the way an opposite confronts its opposite. Visualizing the opposite is something that brings about perfection in hating it. If visualizing continues, hating it also continues. Thus permanent hatred of the false every single moment is one of the parts of prophethood. But God knows best!

The seventh part is forgiveness. And it arises from a light residing permanently in the body. The nature of this light is that it benefits whoever harms it. Indeed, it confronts with benefit whoever receives it with harm. It helps connect whoever sunders it. It pardons whoever treats it unjustly. Now this forgiveness which is characterized in such a way is one of the parts of prophethood. It's necessarily permanent because its cause is the said light that's permanently in the body. Thus the forgiveness is permanent. This is the way our Prophet Muḥammad was—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

Know that only our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—possessed the qualities of prophethood in a perfect form that was unsurpassed in any way. The reason for this is that Adamhood,

contraction, and expansion never reached perfection in any other body as they did in the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Since they reached their highest degree in his pure body (150) and the qualities of prophethood descended on them, their lights increased and their secrets shone forth.

Now the first of the qualities of prophethood descends on the twenty-one qualities which are in Adamhood, contraction and expansion, and in the end it's as if it contains within itself all the lights of the mentioned qualities.

The second one descends on the twenty-two qualities, and it comes to contain the lights of all those qualities.

And the third one descends on the twenty-three qualities and it comes to contain their lights. In sum, it's as if the light of [telling] the truth is composed of twenty-two lights, i.e. its own as well as the light of the qualities that preceded it. The light of patience is composed of twenty-three lights, its own as well as the light of what was before it. And the light of mercy is composed of twenty-four lights. That's why the Prophet's mercy—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was as previously described [i.e. perfect] and it embraced all creatures.

As for the Prophet's knowledge of his Lord—God's blessings and peace be upon him—an explanation of it can't be supported [by the mind]. In sum, if you set the qualities of prophethood before your eyes, reflect on what's been given in explanation of them, penetrate to their essence and then make their lights descend on the lights that were before them and add them to the lights before them, you'll understand the majesty of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and his grandeur before his Lord—He is mighty and glorious! For it's been said:

“Through his good qualities he is above any partner.

Others have no share in the substance of his merits.”<sup>36</sup>

God's blessings and peace be upon him, and upon his family and Companions one and all!

As for the **spirit**: the first of its parts is tasting (*dhawq*) of lights. This consists of a light diffused throughout the spirit, by means of which the spirit tastes the lights of God the Sublime's acts among created beings, as well as the lights found within the translunar

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<sup>36</sup> From the *Burda* of al-Būṣīrī; 'Ibrīziana', p. 131, XV; died 696/1296; al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, p. 167, l. -4.

world in accordance with destiny as decreed and preordained. And the taste of the spirit is different from the body's taste in various ways:

(151) Firstly, it's luminous and it's only concerned with light, by contrast to our taste which is concerned with physical bodies. Now we perceive the taste of honey's sweetness by means of contact between honey's body and our tongue. The spirit tastes the sweetness of honey not by means of honey's body but due to the active light (*nūr al-fi'l*) by means of which the reality of this sweetness arises. And this is how the spirit tastes everything it tastes.

Secondly, in order to taste something the spirit isn't obliged to be in contact with it. The spirit tastes what's in contact with it as well as what isn't in contact with it. This is contrary to our taste where there must be contact in the usual way. What's usual for the spirit is that contact isn't obligatory for taste.

Thirdly, taste has no special location in the spirit but flows through all its external and internal substances, whereas in the case of our taste it's specifically located in the tongue's body.

Fourthly, the spirit's taste is found in all the sense organs, that is to say its taste arises from all the senses. If the spirit sees something tastable such as honey, it experiences the taste of its sweetness due to the active light inherent in that sweetness. It's the same with its seeing all tastable things and all the translunar lights. Likewise, this same tasting occurs when it hears words. If the spirit hears the word "honey", it tastes the light by means of which honey exists and because of this tastes its sweetness. The same happens if, for instance, it hears the words "Paradise", "divine contentment" or "compassion". It then tastes these. Now if it hears the glorious Qur'ān, the first thing it tastes is the light of the word of God contained in it. Then it becomes engaged in other tastes which are beyond description. In sum, the spirit, with its entire body (*dhāt*) and all its substances, experiences a taste from all the other sense organs. But God the Sublime knows best!

Now although spirits have in common the kind of taste that's been described, their tastes vary as to intensity and faintness. The most powerful of spirits is one whose taste penetrates the Celestial Throne (*al-ʿarsh*) and the outspread earth (*al-farsh*), as well as all the other worlds. This is only the case with the spirit of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—because it's the sultan of spirits.

In his pure body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—the spirit has settled down in contentment, love and acceptance, and the veil between the spirit and the body has been removed. Thus the taste of the Prophet’s noble spirit, in its perfection and penetration of the worlds, is firmly rooted in his pure, earthen body. This is perfection beyond which no perfection exists.

(152) The second of the spirit’s parts is purity. And it consists of the spirit’s limpidity, a limpidity with which the spirit was created. This is divided into that which is perceptible to the senses and that which is spiritual.

As for that which is perceptible to the senses, this is because the spirit is a light, and all light possesses absolute limpidity and ultimate purity.

As for that which is spiritual, it consists of the mixture of two forms of knowledge, that is to say inner knowledge and external knowledge. This is so because all creatures know their Creator—He is sublime! In this respect there’s no difference between the mute and those endowed with speech, or the animate and the inanimate. Every created being contains this inner knowledge in all its substances, as was explained earlier in connection with “complete fear”. And for the person whom God shows mercy—He is mighty and glorious—He makes external what was internal. That person comes to know his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—by means of a knowledge within all his substances and he becomes a knower of his Lord in his exterior within all parts of his body. This is among the highest degrees of knowledge. God the Sublime has bestowed this on the spirits and they know their Lord in their exterior within all their bodies, despite their big difference in possessing this limpidity. Indeed, spirits vary from one another in this respect according to how much their bodies differ in smallness and greatness. There are spirits whose size is small and spirits whose size is big. Without doubt ones with a great size have more substances, and their knowledge of their Lord is wider—He is mighty and glorious! Now the greatest spirit in scope and the most vast in size is that of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! It fills the heavens and the earths. None the less, his noble body contains it and encompasses all its secrets. Praise be to Him Who has empowered the pure body to accomplish this. Then if the spirit settles in the body with love, contentment and acceptance, and the veil between the two

is removed, the spirit imparts its sensory and spiritual limpidity to the body. Sensory limpidity then occurs in the body and thence arises limpidity of the blood which is in the body. This entails four things:

1) The blood becomes light. Its heaviness is removed. The heavier the blood is the worse it is and the more lusts it contains.

2) The blood acquires a limpid odor. The sign of this is that its odor becomes like that of dough. As for (153) bad blood, its odor is like "fetid mud" (15/26-27).

3) It has limpidity of color, and the sign of this is that it tends toward yellow. As for the bad blood, its color tends toward black. The closer it is to black the worse it is.

4) It has limpidity of taste, and the sign of this is that it's sweet. As for the bad blood, its taste resembles something that's been burnt. If the substance of the blood is purified, the allotments of Satan are removed from it. The lusts and the darkness of sins are separated from it. Then the body's arteries are nourished by this pure blood and become pure through its limpidity. The lusts are separated from it, as well as the snares of Satan. When this sensory limpidity occurs in the body, the spirit provides the body with spiritual limpidity. Then the body comes to know its Lord in its exterior within all its substances. Limpidity, both sensory and spiritual, occurs in the pure body because it encompasses the noble spirit<sup>37</sup> and contains all its secrets. The most excellent blessing and purest greeting be upon him who possesses it!

The third part of the spirit is discernment. This is a light in the spirit by which things are discerned as they really are with perfect discernment. In this matter the spirit has no need of learning but by simply seeing something or hearing a word, it discerns it and discerns its states, its beginning and its end, what it will become and what it was created for. Now spirits are different from one another in such discernment, depending on the extent of their capacity of awareness. There are some spirits that are strong in their capacity of awareness, while others are weak. The strongest of spirits in this respect is that of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Nothing in the universe is veiled from it. It's aware of the universe's Celestial Throne, the universe's greatest height and lowest

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<sup>37</sup> Here reference is made to the specific limpidity that results from the Prophet's 'noble spirit' being contained within his pure body.

depth, its here and now and its hereafter, its Hell-fire and its Paradise, because all of this was created for his sake—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The Prophet's discernment—blessings and peace be upon him—penetrates through all these worlds. He possesses discernment concerning the heavenly bodies, whence, when and why they were created and where the orb of each celestial sphere will arrive. And he possesses discernment concerning the angels of each celestial sphere, where, when and why they were created and where they will arrive. He discerns the difference in their ranks and their utmost degree. And he possesses discernment—blessings and peace be upon him—concerning the Seventy Veils and the angels of each veil, in the same manner as previously. He possesses discernment—blessings and peace be upon him—concerning the luminous bodies in the translunar world (154) such as stars, the sun and the moon, the Tablet and the Pen,<sup>38</sup> Barzakh and the spirits it contains, in the same manner as previously. Likewise, he possesses discernment—blessings and peace be upon him—concerning the seven earths and the creatures of each earth on land and in the sea. All this he discerns in the same way. And again he possesses discernment—blessings and peace be upon him—concerning the paradises and their degrees, the number of the inhabitants in them and their stations, and the same is true of the remaining worlds. Now there's no rivalry in this with the knowledge which is eternal and devoid of beginning (*azalī*), the contents of which are infinite. Such is the case because eternal knowledge consists of what isn't limited to this world. The secrets of Lordliness and the attributes of Divinity, which are infinite, in no way belong to this world.

Thus when the spirit loves the body, it provides it with discernment. For this reason the Prophet's pure body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was endowed with the discernment just described, and by this means it penetrated all the worlds. Praise be to Him Who honored and ennobled his body, and gave it this capacity!

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<sup>38</sup> The Tablet (*lawḥ*) and the Pen (*qalam*) are two entities in the Qur'ānic, i.e. the 'Islamic', cosmology; see Radtke, *Weltgeschichte*, p. 165; and especially Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, pp. 6-8 Arabic/pp. 135-37 transl. Recorded on the Tablet is everything that will ever occur.



The fourth part of the spirit is deeper vision (*baṣīra*). This consists of the diffusion of understanding through all parts of the spirit, just as the other senses such as sight, hearing, taste and smell, are also diffused through the whole spirit. Thus science (*‘ilm*) exists throughout the whole spirit. Likewise, sight exists throughout the whole of it, as does smell, taste and touch, so that there isn't one of its substances in which science, hearing, sight, smell, taste and touch don't exist. Moreover, its sight is from all sides, and the other senses are like this as well. If the spirit loves the body and the veil between them is removed, the spirit provides the body with this deeper vision. Then the body sees from the front and from behind, from above and below, from right and left, by means of all its substances. And this is how it hears and how it smells. In sum, whatever the spirit can do the body can do. The veil between the Prophet's pure body and the noble spirit—God's blessings and peace be upon him—disappeared the day that the angels split open his noble chest. He was then a child. On that occasion his spirit and his body were closely joined and associated—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Then his body became aware of everything his spirit was aware of—God's blessings and peace be upon him! For this reason he could see behind him, just as he saw in front of him. That was when he said to his Companions—God be pleased with them:

(155) "Perform your genuflection and prostration, for I see you behind me the [same] way I see you in front of me."<sup>39</sup>

This is the secret behind the *ḥadīth*. But God the Sublime knows best!

The fifth part of the spirit is lack of unawareness. This consists of an absence of ignorance's characteristics and the opposites to science, in accordance with the degree reached by the spirit's science and its reflection. The spirit isn't affected by error, unawareness and forgetfulness regarding any particular information, in conformity with the amount of information it's attained. The things it knows it doesn't acquire by stages but they enter its reflection all at once. Nor is it characteristic of its science that if it turns its attention to one thing, it neglects something else. Instead, if it attends to something, other things it knows occur with that thing. In fact, it has no need of focusing its attention because its forms of science are inherent in its

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<sup>39</sup> *Concordance* IV, p. 494; *Faḥ* II, pp. 465 f.

nature. In its primordial nature it acquired its various forms of science all at once. And they persist as long as its body (*dhāt*) persists. Such is the meaning of lack of unawareness. And this is established for every spirit. What varies is the amount of science. Some spirits are endowed with much science, while others are endowed with a small amount.

The greatest of spirits with regard to science and the strongest with regard to reflection is the Prophet's spirit—God's blessings and peace be upon him—for it's the chief bee among the spirits. It perceives everything that exists in the worlds, as previously described, all at once and without stages and degrees. Then once association between the spirit and the Prophet's pure body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—took place, the spirit endowed the body with lack of unawareness and the body became aware of everything in the world without being affected by unawareness in this matter. But not every awareness is the same as every other awareness. The awareness of the spirit is all at once and without different stages. The body's awareness, on the other hand, proceeds by degrees and stages so that whatever the body turns its attention to in the world it comes to know. But the body's science only occurs if it focuses its attention. And if it directs its attention to something else, it comes to know that [also]. So it proceeds to deal with what's in the world, and through science it acquires dominance over what's in the world but by attending to one thing after another. The body isn't capable of what the spirit is capable of, namely obtaining this all at once. That's how they differ from one another with respect to lack of unawareness. The spirit's lack of unawareness is as has already been explained. As for (156) the body, its lack of unawareness depends on the body focusing its attention. If it pays attention to something, that thing won't elude it, and error, unawareness and forgetfulness won't affect it while it focuses its attention. However, if it doesn't focus on it, the body may neglect it and be subject to error and forgetfulness regarding it. For this reason, as reported in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said:

"I'm a human being who forgets like you forget. Therefore if I forget, remind me!"<sup>40</sup>

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40 *Concordance* VI, p. 443.

The Prophet said this—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—when something had escaped his attention and they hadn’t informed him.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add: By God what a great leader! He accorded its due to reality (*ḥaqīqa*) and he accorded its due to the holy law (*sharīʿa*). Regarding the *ḥadīth*:

‘Verily, I don’t [really] forget but I forget in order to establish a custom.’

...the *ḥuffāz* such as the imam Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr in the *Tamhīd*,<sup>41</sup> Ibn Ḥajar in the *Fath [al-bārī]*,<sup>42</sup> and Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī in the *Hāshiyat al-Muwattaʿa*<sup>43</sup> say that it’s one of the *ḥadīths* whose chain of transmission doesn’t go back to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—in any of the *ḥadīth* collections. Ibn Ḥajar adds: ‘It’s sufficient to reject it on the basis of what he says in the *ḥadīth*: “I’m a human being who forgets like you forget.”’<sup>44</sup>

The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—wasn’t content to attribute humanity to himself but even likened his forgetfulness to that of his Companions—God be pleased with them! See what else he has to say in the *Fath [al-bārī]*. But God knows best!

‘The sixth part of the spirit is the power of penetration. This consists of its being enabled by God the Sublime to penetrate bodies and pass through them. Thus it penetrates mountains, boulders, rocks and walls, plunges into them and goes about within them wherever it wishes. And if the spirit settles in the body and loves it and accompanies it, the spirit endows it with this power and the body becomes capable of doing what the spirit can do.

Connected with this is the story of the Prophet John<sup>45</sup>—peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—whose people had designs on him. He fled from them and entered into a tree. His spirit, out of love for his body, endowed it with the said power, and so his body penetrated the physical mass of the tree and entered it.

41 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 131, XVI; died 463/1071; *Tamhīd* V, p. 208.

42 Not found in the *Fath*.

43 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 131, XVII; he means the *Tanwīr al-hawālik*, i.e. I, p. 121: the *ḥadīth* isn’t *ṣaḥīḥ*.

44 *Concordance* VI, p. 443; *Fath* II, p. 62.

45 Here John the Baptist has been substituted for Zacharias; on Zacharias cf. Thaʿlabī, *Qīṣaṣ*, p. 225.

Also connected with this is the way the Friends of God—God be pleased with them—find themselves in a particular place and how they enter it without opening a door.

(157) And connected with this as well is the way they can walk [anywhere] with a single footstep—God be pleased with them—so that a Friend may place his one foot in the west and the other in the east. Now the body can't support cleaving the air between east and west in one instant. The wind would sever the body's joints and break its limbs to pieces, dry out its blood and the fluids it contains. But the spirit endows it with the said power so that what happens then happens.

Also related to this is the case of the Night Journey and the Ascension. Indeed, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—went as far as he went and then returned in a short time. All that was the spirit's work when it endowed the body with the power of penetration inherent in the spirit. But God knows best!

The seventh part of the spirit is lack of feeling physical pains such as hunger, thirst, heat and cold, etc. Indeed, the spirit feels none of these things. Hunger, thirst, heat and cold don't exist for the spirit. It's the same with sharp penetrating objects. The spirit suffers no harm from them and feels no pains of this kind. The same is the case when it passes through a dirty place. It suffers no harm from this and feels no pain, in contrast to an angel in this situation. An angel likes pleasant odors and recoils from bad odors. If this characteristic weren't present in the spirit, it couldn't support being in the body it occupies. But God knows best!

Now these seven things are indispensable for every spirit. And that's why we've said concerning the spirit that these are the spirit's parts approximately. Moreover, spirits vary with respect to their parts, as previously described. Likewise, as previously described, the highest spirit in this regard is the Prophet's spirit—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Also explained was that what the spirit possesses in the way of these qualities is established in the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him! These seven lights are then added to the other twenty-eight, i.e. the lights mentioned previously as belonging to Adamhood, contraction, expansion and prophethood.

The first part of the spirit, which is tasting the lights found in the [Prophet's] noble body, incorporates the lights that precede it. It's as if it's made up of all of them, having added them to its own light.

(158) Then the second part of the spirit, which is purity, is made up of its own light and the light of taste that precedes it, as well as the [other] lights that precede it. And so it is with the other parts, in accordance with the same procedure. But God knows best!

As for **science**—and by this I mean perfect science that's attained the utmost of purity and limpidity—it's a science that contains the following seven qualities.

Know that science is the light of reason, reason is the light of the spirit, and the spirit is the light of the body. It was mentioned earlier that the pure body, which has had the veil removed from between itself and the spirit, is characterized by the previous lights attributed to the spirit. Likewise, if the spirit is perfect in purity and limpidity, it's characterized by all that's been attributed to the light of reason which is science. Thus these seven lights, which are in science, characterize the spirit, in addition to what was previously described.

Now the first part of science is conveying known things, and this is a light in science which causes it to acquire known things as science in a way that surpasses what's perceived by sight, by hearing and by the other senses. The occurrence of things in science is like their occurrence as they really are (*al-dhāt*). Their occurrence in sight, for example, is as in shadow and fantasy, that is to say the second [kind of] occurrence is like fantasy compared with the first occurrence. Now the occurrence in science is the real one, whereas the occurrence in sight is the fantastical one—this being the reverse of what people think. The matter is reversed in people's thinking due to the small amount of the light of science they have in them. Indeed, it's the amount of a hair or less. Due to this serious lack of science in them, they've become dependent on the senses.

As for him on whom God—He is mighty and glorious—has bestowed perfect science, his sight and other senses are like fantasy compared with the science he possesses.'

The Shaykh offered a similitude to clarify the situation.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Let's suppose a man builds a house and as it happens he himself undertakes all the kinds of work in its construction. He fetches the earth, fires it and makes bricks from it. He fetches the stone, fires it and makes it into lime. He

fetches the wood and saws it. He builds the structure and he sets up the pillars. No one gives him any help in these tasks and, from the first to the last, he takes charge of all the works involved. Thus everything to do with the house has been made (159) according to his plan and intention, his thought and deliberation. Everything about it conforms to the temperament of his person (*dhāt*) and is present in his thought without exception. If he's absent from the house for a while and then returns to it and looks at it, and another man looks at it with him, they may both see it together but the builder will surpass the other man because the house with its parts and the parts of its parts, and the details of the works and the details of its details—these are what the builder's hand has fashioned. He knows the house's interior and exterior, its inside and its outside, in a manner that the other man does not. In the same way perfect science encompasses the exterior and the interior, the parts and the parts of the parts, as well as the details and the details of the details. Sight is [only] concerned with the outer surface of the house without encompassing the whole of it, much less penetrating to the interior. Now this similitude is merely approximate and not absolutely true. Only someone whom God the Sublime has shown mercy is aware of perfect science. No one reaches its essence through similitudes and approximations.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, asked: 'How are things acquired in science?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Let's suppose that the light of science is like an ounce (*ūqiyya*) of clear, pure water which has retained its original nature with its fineness and the limpidity of its substance. Next let us suppose another ounce of water made up of many dissimilar drops, ones that are salty, sweet, bitter, sour, cold, hot and so on. We then pour the composite ounce into the pure ounce, and they mix and mingle so that the two waters become one water. Here the first ounce is like science, and the second ounce is like known things in terms of their differences and diversity.'

Then I asked: 'Are the dissimilar drops in the ounce of known things separated, each in its own space, or not separated but mingled and mixed?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'They're mingled.' He then took a palmful of water and said: 'This is the ounce of science.' Then he took a drop from some other water and added it to the water in his palm. He asked: 'Hasn't this mixed in completely with all the

substances of the water?' (160) I replied: 'Yes, it has.' He said: 'This has been acquired in science.' Then he took another drop and added it to the water, saying: 'Hasn't this mingled with it?' I replied: 'Yes, it has.' He said: 'This is a second known thing acquired in science.' He then took a third drop and added it to the water, saying: 'Hasn't this mingled with it?' I replied: 'Yes, it has.' He said: 'This is how known things are acquired in science. The light of science in the first drop is devoid of forms of knowledge and then gradually acquires one thing after another in science. Known things are acquired and the light of science increases. The light never has an end, just as there's no end to known things. Indeed, the light is like a sheath for known things. If what's in the sheath is small, the size of the sheath is small. But if what's in the sheath is large, the sheath is also large.

What's wondrous about the case of this sheath is that in the first drop it's very small, just large enough to contain a single known thing. If a second known thing is added, the sheath expands for it, and this is how it continues without end. But God knows best!

The second part of science is a lack of squandering [knowledge]. This is a light in science that requires that something of its known things is only received by a person who's deserving. And this light keeps it from reaching anyone unworthy of it so that, even to begin with, it doesn't reach him. But supposing it does reach such a person, this light retrieves it, interrogates it and sends it back to its origin, thus protecting it from staying with someone unworthy of it. This is the way the Prophet was—blessings and peace be upon him! He spoke forth the lights of forms of knowledge, and the pious and the profligate, the believer and the hypocrite, heard them from him.

As for the profligate and the hypocrite, these forms of knowledge do not settle with them or stay in their mind because the said light restores them to their pure origin and shining place which is the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

When it comes to the people of love and faith—God be pleased with them—they're worthy of receiving wisdom and are the place where good things are accepted, as God the Sublime has said:

"They were more deserving of them and worthy of them" (48/26).

If they hear these lights, the lights settle in them because of their purity.

In sum, science is divided into what's pure—whose light contains whiteness—and into what's impure—whose light contains dark blue.

Let's suppose there are four men, one of whom has pure, perfect science, the second pure yet little science, the third impure but perfect science, and the fourth impure and little science. Now let's suppose they come together and begin to discuss their forms of knowledge. The man with pure but deficient science benefits from the man with pure, perfect science but he doesn't benefit at all from the third man because there's a lack of affinity between them. The one with deficient, impure science benefits from the third man but doesn't benefit at all (161) from the first because of their lack of affinity. In science generally there's no squandering. If it's pure, it doesn't enter the impure and settle in it. If it's impure, it doesn't enter the pure and settle in it. Indeed, the pure enters the pure and the bad enters the bad.

The third part of science is knowledge of languages, as well as the voices of animals and inanimate things. This is so because when things occur in perfect science, they occur in it in their realities and in their essential as well as their concomitant and contingent attributes. Languages and voices arise from contingent matters, and it's impossible for science to acquire the contingent attributes without knowing what arises from them. As for known things whose realities occur in science, they're divided into the inanimate and the animate.

Now what's inanimate also has a voice, such as the murmuring of water, the creaking of a door, and the sound of one stone falling on top of another, etc. A person endowed with science understands the meaning of these voices.

As for what's animate, it's divided into speaking and non-speaking. The one that speaks is man who possesses a recognized language. When it comes to non-speaking beings, they're divided into birds and animals, and other such things. They all possess recognized forms of speech (*manṭiq*), and a person endowed with perfect science understands all of this.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, wish to add that I've heard many stories in this connection from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—some of which will be presented in this book—if God the Sublime is willing!

He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for mute things which have no voice like a wall, a house, deserts and wastelands, mountains and trees, God alone understands their speech—He is mighty and glorious—and it's a secret between them and their



Creator—He is exalted! Moreover, God the Sublime may sometimes reveal this to a prophet as an evidentiary miracle or to a Friend of God as a thaumaturgic gift.

The fourth part of science is knowledge of final outcomes. Earlier when discernment (*tamyīz*) which is one of the spirit's parts was dealt with, it was explained that this knowledge is a light in the spirit. By means of it, the spirit discerns things as they really are with perfect discernment and persists in discerning things by means of it, classifying them, degree by degree, until it arrives at final outcomes. When the spirit reaches final outcomes, discernment halts and that part [of science] (162) which is knowledge of final outcomes arrives and looks at the outcomes, dividing them in accordance with the way they really are.

Now the final outcome is confined to two kinds: on the one hand, extinction in the hereafter, as in the case of inanimate things and suchlike which have no eternal existence in the hereafter, or, on the other hand, eternal existence, as in the case of beings subject to the religious duties and other such beings.

As for something the final outcome of which is extinction, this part [of science] sees its extinction, how and when it occurs, how the thing in question is engulfed in extinction, how its parts are destroyed and cease to exist stage by stage until it becomes pure non-existence, in what location its extinction takes place, the causes of its extinction, and the things which necessitate its becoming extinct. In this way its extinction becomes a clear, understandable matter in which there's nothing strange and out of the ordinary. Much science is on hand about this subject.

Now as for the being whose final outcome is eternal existence, discernment goes on classifying him by degrees until it places him in Paradise or in Hell. Then this part [of science] comes and examines his reward and gives a detailed explanation of it according to what awaits him in Paradise. And the situation regarding his punishment is like this as well. Much could be said on this subject.'

Perhaps with [help from] the strength and power of God we will mention in this book some of what we heard about it from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! But God knows best!

'The fifth part of science is familiarity with the forms of knowledge pertaining to human beings and the Jinn, and these forms of knowledge are numerous.' Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased

with him: ‘There are three hundred and sixty-six forms of knowledge concerning human beings.<sup>46</sup> The same is true of the Jinn, except they have three less than human beings. Thus they possess three hundred and sixty-three sciences. All of these pertain to their circumstances.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Included in this is knowledge of the means by which they acquire their sustenance, both outwardly and inwardly. Their outward sustenance refers to what gives existence to their bodies and duration to their lives. This consists of knowledge of the means of gainful activity such as agriculture, farming and commerce, and all the other handicrafts. Knowledge of all this is indispensable, as well as knowledge of what does and what doesn’t bring profit. Also included in this is the science of proper behavior (*‘ilm al-adab*) which (163) the people designate the science of governance (*‘ilm al-siyāsa*). It’s also necessary to have knowledge of the means by which social intercourse exists and human association persists. Much science exists concerning these matters.

As for their inner sustenance, this is what joins the bondsman to his Lord—He is exalted—, gathers him unto Him and guides him to Him. It includes knowledge of the legal prescriptions with their lights and their secrets that lead to God the Sublime. And it informs about God’s judgement in each particular case, what wisdom there is in His setting down laws and what profit from it comes to the bondsman in this world and the hereafter.’

If we wrote down what we heard from our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—concerning this subject and recorded the details and the individual legal judgements (*a‘yān al-nawāzil*) that we questioned him about, we would set forth something astonishing and highly unusual. Anyone who paused over it would know, as soon as he heard it and understood it, that it’s the truth without any doubt. Moreover, in his company—God be pleased with him—I delved into the legal controversies between the shaykhs of the Mālikī school of jurisprudence—God have mercy on them—and subsequently into the legal controversies between the masters of the other schools of jurisprudence, and then into the controversies arising between the *sharī‘as* of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and this for a number of years. I heard more secrets in this regard than can be counted. God grant us the enjoyment of it in this world and in

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<sup>46</sup> A statement not met with elsewhere; in the *Ibrīz* the number 366 often simply stands for a great number.

the world to come, through His benevolence and His generosity—amen!

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘Included in these sciences is knowledge of the afflictions that befall the means of sustenance, both the outward and the inner ones, and how to ward off these afflictions, so that someone with this science is fully aware of his situation regarding all his means. He knows what affords him special profit in this world and in the world to come, and likewise what causes him special harm. Included in this knowledge is the perfect science of medicine in accordance with reality. This is either outward, which concerns the outward aptness of one’s sustenance, or it’s inner knowledge, which concerns the inner aptness of one’s sustenance. But God knows best!

The sixth part of science is knowledge of sciences that have to do with the states of both worlds, that is to say the translunar and the sublunar world. Now the sublunar world can be reduced to seven things: the four elements, these being water, earth, wind and fire; and the three composites, (164) namely plants, minerals and animals. Perfect science must necessarily include perfect knowledge of the realities (*ḥaqā’iq*) of these things, knowledge of the special characteristics that distinguish them, knowledge of their benefits and their detriments, as well as knowledge of their powers and how they differ individually with regard to those powers. Thus fire may have an extended body, while its powers are weak. Another fire may be the reverse of this. There’s much that could be said on this subject. But God knows best!

The seventh part of science is the limitation of the directions to one direction, namely the forward direction. This is one of the parts of the perfect knower. Once science is a light perceived from all directions so that sight occurs in it, if God confers additional powers on its possessor and what he sees from any other direction becomes like what he sees in the forward direction—no more and no less—and it occurs in his sight, then he only perceives the forward direction. The other directions are effaced in his vision and only the forward direction remains. Such science is characterized by perfection and this only occurs in the science of someone who’s experienced illumination. This is how one should understand the *ḥadīth*:

“Verily, I see you behind me the way I see you in front of me.”

Although they're behind him, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—sees them in his direction of prayer (*qibla*) just as he sees whatever [else] is in his direction of prayer. If someone with science perceives a difference in the directions, his science isn't perfect. But God the Sublime knows best!

As for **apostleship**, the first of its parts is the repose of the spirit in the body, a repose of contentment, love and acceptance. This occurs because in pure bodies there are lights derived from people's faith in God—He is mighty and glorious! According to whether these lights are few or abundant, the spirit's repose in the body dwindles or increases, for light is drawn to light and spirits consist of lights. But the light of faith in God the Sublime is brighter and clearer than the spirit's light. So if it sees that light in a particular body, it's attracted to it and finds it sweet and agreeable. The spirit's repose in a body whose amount of faith in God is one ell, for instance, isn't like the spirit's repose in a body whose light of faith is two ells—and so forth.

(165) Moreover, the light of faith increases with an increase of the light of wages. This occurs because works have their wages and wages have their lights. Now the lights of these wages are reflected in bodies and through them bodies obtain an interior benefit in the world, and they obtain an external benefit in the hereafter because these wages become blessings in Paradise which are enjoyed by those who undertake works.'

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'Let's suppose there are two men whose light of faith is equal. One of them did good deeds during his day, while the other did not. They then both go to sleep at night. The light of faith of the man who did good deeds shines, gleams and glitters on an increased level, in contrast to the man who did no good deeds.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'There's no work that receives a greater reward than apostleship. For this reason the faith of the apostles (*mursalūn*)—blessings and peace be upon them—can never be equalled.

Now the apostles—peace be upon them—differ from one another with regard to the greater or lesser number of followers they had. Among all the apostles there's no one who equals our Prophet, as far as the multitude of his followers is concerned—God's blessings and peace be upon him! His reward therefore stands above that of the

[other] apostles—peace be upon him! The light of his faith—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—increased until it reached an extreme that’s unattainable and beyond description. Moreover, the spirit’s repose in the bodies of the apostles is necessarily different from its repose in other people’s bodies. Thus we’ve taken this special repose to be one of the parts of apostleship, and you’ve learned that the spirit’s repose in the body of the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—is superior to its repose in the bodies of the other apostles. Indeed, this part has attained the height of perfection in his body—blessings and peace be upon him!

Another way in which the spirit’s repose varies is that the light of faith established in a body may be smaller than the spirit’s volume or equal to it or greater. Its repose in a body greater than itself is more intense than its repose in one which is not.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘As for bodies in which there’s no light of faith whatsoever, these being the bodies of the infidels, the spirit’s repose in them depends on divine predetermination and compulsion, for otherwise the spirit loathes these bodies in the extreme.

(166) The second part of apostleship is perfect science regarding both the hidden and the visible. By “the hidden” we mean knowledge of what pertains to the True—He is sublime—and to His lofty attributes, and by “the visible” we mean what pertains to creation. The latter includes knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of human beings and the Jinn, the sciences dealing with the affairs of this world and the hereafter, and the sciences dealing with matters of the final outcome. Some indication of these subjects has already been given. What’s presented here is a part that contains perfection in knowledge of these matters. Perfection in this domain and [attaining] the utmost degree in it is one of the parts of apostleship. Every apostle (*rasūl*) must possess this part and in our Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—it reached an unsurpassable degree. But God knows best!

The third part of apostleship is truthfulness (*ṣidq*) with everyone in words and actions, such that actions and words are in accordance with contentment and love of God—He is mighty and glorious—for mankind has been ordered to follow the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them! It’s absolutely necessary that they be as we’ve specified: they must profess only the truth (*ḥaqq*), speak only in

truthfulness, and only joke in earnestness. If they report something, it's certainly that way, and it's a fact without any doubt. If appearances seem to contradict any of this, it can be explained with a valid explanation and unambiguous truth. You'll become familiar with examples of this in the present book—if God the Sublime is willing! In short, in their words—blessings and peace be upon them—they're like the dwellers in Paradise as far as the latter's desires. Just as when the dwellers in Paradise desire something and it happens without any doubt, in the same way when the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—say something, it's so without any doubt. But God knows best!

This concept of truthfulness (*ṣidq*) goes beyond the previously dealt with concept of telling the truth (*ḥaqq*), which is one of the parts of prophethood. The truthfulness under discussion here resembles its companion [telling the truth] with regard to what has been divinely predetermined. It's as if it's deprived of free will, in contrast to telling the truth which hasn't reached this final degree. And there's a light in truthfulness which is superior to telling the truth. But God knows best!

The fourth part of apostleship is tranquillity (*sakīna*) and dignity. This is a light in the heart that causes serenity in God for its possessor and the bondsman's trust in Him, as well as attributing all force and power to Him and his according no importance to anyone but Him—He is mighty and glorious! Thus if God—He is mighty and glorious—orders its possessor to carry out a task and the people of the earth wish to oppose him in this and are hostile to him, he pays them no heed and (167) attributes no importance to them. Indeed, he considers them to be as nothing. Similarly, his attitude toward them is the same if they're friendly to him and love him because of his task, and help him with it. Thus he attributes no force and power to them, whether they oppose him or agree with him.

As for a person who isn't endowed with tranquillity, if he hears someone is coming against him and intends him harm, he attributes force and power to himself, and likewise he attributes force and power to his enemy. He ponders ways and means to ward off his enemy, and consequently he succumbs to doubts. One moment he considers how to take flight, another moment how to save himself if an encounter takes place. He continues like this until his enemy confronts him. Then his heart is sick and his resolution dissolves. He

makes no worthy showing of himself.—Thus tranquillity is one of the parts of apostleship because the apostle is ordered to be hostile to the people of the earth until they renounce their unbelief and their falsehood. But he cares not whether they respond to him or turn away from him, whether they love him or reject him. Such is the situation of the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them! Verily, the people of the earth displayed hostility to them and, as it were, [joined ranks and] shot at them with a single bow, but this had no effect on them.'

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'This [quality of] tranquillity is mentioned in several verses of the noble Qurʾān, as for instance in God the Sublime's words:

"Then God sent down His tranquillity to His Apostle and to His believers" (9/26).

As for its being sent down to the Apostle—God's blessings and peace be upon him—this refers to how the effects of tranquillity were clearly manifested in his firmness and persistence in the face of many an enemy. Its being sent down to the believers refers to how tranquillity was brought about among them through his blessing—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

Then our talk brought us to the tranquillity (*sakīna*) contained in the Ark of the Israelites which is mentioned in God the Sublime's words:

'That the Ark will come to you with a tranquillity in it from your Lord' (2/248).

And our talk brought us to the tranquillity mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of Usayd b. Ḥuḍayr<sup>47</sup>—God be pleased with him—and to the tranquillity mentioned in other *ḥadīths* besides this one. I knew what the authorities of Qurʾānic commentary say about it—God be pleased with them! But he gave an explanation like that of someone who beholds the matter with his own eyes—God be pleased with him! Then the talk brought us to how Gabriel—peace be upon him—came before the Prophet in the form of Dihya b. Khalifa al-Kalbī.<sup>48</sup> If not for fear of being tedious, I'd write it all down. But God knows best!

<sup>47</sup> *Aʿlām* I, pp. 330 f.; *Usd* I, pp. 111 f., no. 170; not found in the *Faḥ*.

<sup>48</sup> A man of outstanding beauty in the time of the Prophet; the angel Gabriel once adopted his persona as a disguise; cf. EI s.n.

‘The fifth part of apostleship is perfect vision (*mushāhada*). There’s no way to explain this matter because it surpasses human understanding, just as there’s no way to explain knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—which is one of the parts of prophethood.

The sixth part of apostleship is that the apostle dies while still alive. This consists of the apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—seeing the state of his life the way the dead see it after their death. This is one of the parts of apostleship because the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—have been sent to impart desire and fear. These two [emotions] are only experienced by someone who sees the states of the hereafter directly and then arouses desire for the House of desire and fear of the House of torment. He explains to the people the punishment in the grave and how the spirits ascend to Barzakh, and other such things that their understanding is able to support.’

And I asked: ‘Doesn’t the revelation (*al-wahy*) of that to the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—make this vision superfluous?’

(169) He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Revelation is speech, and speech is words, and words are only for someone who understands their meaning. But this vision unveils for him the circumstances of the return to God and he understands them as if they were directly before his eyes.

As for revelation, it entails permission from God—He is mighty and glorious—to transmit what He wants transmitted of the things that human minds can support and bodies are capable of hearing.

As for what human minds can’t support and the hearing of which would cause livers to dissolve, the apostle sees this with the referred to vision and without revelation. Moreover, if words reached someone who didn’t understand their meanings, it would be impossible for him to comprehend them and to make them comprehensible to others. But God knows best!

The seventh part of apostleship is that he lives the life of the people of Paradise. This consists of the apostle’s body—blessings and peace be upon him—being given to drink what the bodies of the people of Paradise are given to drink after they enter Paradise. The bodies of the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—are like



those of the people of Paradise inside Paradise. And the abode [of the hereafter] is made up of two abodes.

There's the abode of extinction which contains two parts, the one luminous and the other gloom-laden.

Then there's the abode of eternal existence and it has two parts, a luminous one which is Paradise, and a gloom-laden one which is Hell-fire. If the veil is removed, every part of the abode of eternal existence helps what corresponds to it in the abode of extinction. The luminous part helps the luminous part, and the gloom-laden one helps the gloom-laden one. But the effect of removing the veil is variable. In the case of the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—it occurs in advance and they experience it in this world, as was already mentioned in the sixth part. They stand above all that's luminous in this world—peace be upon them! Moreover, their noble bodies receive assistance from what's luminous in the abode of eternal existence which is Paradise. As for the rest of mankind, the removal of the veil takes place for them on the Day of Resurrection and on that day they receive assistance. Whoever belongs to the people of faith is then assisted by the light of Paradise, and whoever belongs to the people of tyranny is assisted by the fire of Hell. God protect us from Hell-fire, through His grace and His generosity—amen!

In short, receiving assistance depends on the removal of the veil, and it was removed from them in the world—blessings and peace be upon them—and thus they lived lives like the inhabitants of Paradise.'

(170) He said—God be pleased with him: 'Now this is the explanation of the seven parts which is the quantity that belongs to every letter of the seven letters (*aḥruf*), namely: Adamhood, contraction, expansion, prophethood, the spirit, science, and apostleship.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, say: Let's count these parts [once more], for this is useful in explaining the divisions which the question was about.

1) Adamhood contains: perfection of external beauty; perfection of the external senses and suchlike; perfection of internal creaturely beauty; perfection of the internal senses; masculinity; removal of Satan's allotment; and perfection of reason.

2) Contraction contains: the diffusion of a sense organ throughout the body which experiences pleasure in the good and pain in the

false; justice; aversion to the opposite; obeying God's command; the inclination to one's own kind while taking on its qualities; perfect power of concentration; and lack of shame in speaking the truth.

3) Expansion contains: perfect joy; the settling of the good in the body; the opening of the external senses; the opening of the internal senses; the station of loftiness; readily conferring pardon; lowering the wing of humility.

4) Prophethood contains: speaking the truth; patience; compassion; knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious; perfect fear of Him; loathing the false; and forgiveness.

5) The spirit contains: tasting lights; purity; discernment; deeper vision; lack of unawareness; the power of penetration; and imperviousness to pains from physical objects.

6) Science contains: conveying the forms of knowledge; knowledge of languages; knowledge of final outcomes; knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of both worlds; knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn; and limiting the directions to the forward direction.

7) Apostleship contains: the spirit's settling in the body out of love, contentment and acceptance; perfect science concerning the hidden and the visible; truthfulness with everyone; tranquillity with (171) dignity; perfect vision; his being dead while still alive; and his living the life of the inhabitants of Paradise.

\* \* \*

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'As for the explanation of the different pronunciations used by Qur'ānic reciters among the Companions and others in accordance with the seven internal lights—God be pleased with them—you've learned that the parts of the internal letters (*aḥruf*) amount to forty-nine. Nor is it hidden from you that the Arabic language is made up of twenty-nine letters. Now each letter possesses one part from among the previously mentioned parts.

1) *hamza*: obedience, which is a part of contraction.

2) *bā'*: tranquillity, which is a part of apostleship.

3) *tā'*: perfection of the external senses, which is a part of Adamhood.

4) *thā'*: justice, which is a part of contraction.

5) *jīm*: patience, which is a part of prophethood.

6) *ḥā'*: perfect compassion, which is a part of prophethood.

- 7) *khā'*: tasting lights, which is a part of the spirit.
- 8) *dāl*: purity, which is a part of the spirit.
- 9) *dhāl*: knowledge of languages, which is a part of science.
- 10) *rā'*: readily pardoning, which is a part of expansion.
- 11) *zā'*: truthfulness with everyone, which is a part of apostleship.
- 12) *tā'*: discernment, which is a part of the spirit.
- 13) *zā'*: removal of Satan's allotment, which is a part of Adamhood.
- 14) *kāf*: knowledge of God the Sublime, which is a part of prophethood.
- 15) *lām*: perfect science, which is a part of apostleship.
- 16) *mīm*: masculinity, which is a part of Adamhood.
- 17) *nūn*: perfect joy, which is part of expansion.
- 18) *ṣād*: perfect reason, which is a part of Adamhood.
- 19) *ḍād*: speaking the truth, which is a part of prophethood.
- 20) *ʿayn*: forgiveness, which is a part of prophethood.
- (172) 21) *ghayn*: perfection of external form, which is a part of Adamhood.
- 22) *fā'*: conveying forms of knowledge, which is a part of science.
- 23) *qāf*: deeper vision, which is a part of the spirit.
- 24) *sīn*: lowering the wing of humility, which is a part of expansion.
- 25) *shīn*: the perfect power of concentration, which is a part of contraction.
- 26) *hā'*: aversion to the opposite, which is a part of contraction.
- 27) *wāw*: he dies while still alive, which is a part of apostleship.
- 28) *lām-alif*: lack of unawareness, which is a part of the spirit.
- 29) *yā'* which is the last of the letters: complete fear of God—He is mighty and glorious—which is a part of prophethood. And this comes to twenty-nine letters.

Thus five of the letters belong to Adamhood, namely *tā'*, *zā'*, *mīm*, *ṣād* and *ghayn*. *Tā'* possesses perfection of the external senses, *zā'* removal of Satan's allotment, *mīm* masculinity, *ṣād* perfection of reason, and *ghayn* perfection of external form. Two parts of Adamhood are left over.

Four of these letters belong to contraction, namely *ḥamza*, *thā'*, *shīn*, and *hā'*. *Ḥamza* possesses obedience, *thā'* justice, *shīn* the power of concentration, and *hā'* aversion to the opposite. Three parts of contraction are left over.

Three of these letters belong to expansion, namely *rāʾ*, *nūn* and *sīn*. *Rāʾ* possesses readily pardoning, *nūn* perfect joy, and *sīn* lowering the wing of humility. Four parts of expansion are left over.

Six of these letters belong to prophethood, namely *jīm*, (173) *ḥāʾ*, *kāf*, *dād*, *ʿayn* and *yāʾ* which is the last letter. *Jīm* possesses patience, *ḥāʾ* perfect compassion, *kāf* knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—*dād* speaking the truth, *ʿayn* forgiveness, and *yāʾ* complete fear of God—He is mighty and glorious! One part of prophethood is left over.

Five of these letters belong to the spirit, namely *dāl*, *khāʾ*, *ṭāʾ*, *qāf*, and *lām-alif*. *Dāl* possesses purity, *khāʾ* tasting lights, *ṭāʾ* discernment, *qāf* deeper vision, and *lām-alif* lack of unawareness. Two parts of the spirit are left over.

Two letters from these letters belong to science, namely *dhāl* and *fāʾ*. *Dhāl* possesses knowledge of languages, and *fāʾ* conveying forms of knowledge. Five parts of science are left over.

Four of these letters belong to apostleship, namely *bāʾ*, *zāʾ*, *lām* and *wāw*. *Bāʾ* possesses tranquillity, *zāʾ* truthfulness toward everyone, *lām* perfect science, and *wāw* “he dies while still alive”. Three parts of apostleship are left over.

These twenty-nine letters are distributed among twenty-nine parts. Twenty parts are left over. For if you subtract twenty-nine, i.e. the number of the letters, from forty-nine, i.e. the number of the parts, twenty parts are left over. Now the twenty-nine that were subtracted were those mentioned above: five for Adamhood, four for contraction, three for expansion, six for prophethood, five for the spirit, two for science, and four for apostleship—which comes to a total of twenty-nine.

The remaining twenty, as mentioned above, are: two from Adamhood, three from contraction, four from expansion, one from prophethood, two from the spirit, five from science, and three from apostleship—which comes to a total of twenty.

Let’s now enumerate these twenty and after that we’ll divide them up. Thus we mention the following:

(174) 1) Perfection of internal form, 2) perfection of the internal senses, 3) the sense organ spread throughout the body, which we designated earlier as diffusion of a sense organ throughout the body, by means of which the body experiences pleasure in the good and pain in the bad—and sometimes we designated it as the diffused

faculty, 4) inclination toward one's own kind, 5) lack of shame in speaking the truth, 6) the good settling in the body, 7) the opening of the external senses, 8) the opening of the internal senses, 9) the station of loftiness, 10) loathing for the false, 11) the power of penetration, 12) not experiencing pains from physical objects, 13) lack of squandering, 14) limiting the directions to the forward direction, 15) knowledge of final outcomes, 16) knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, 17) knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of both worlds, 18) the spirit's repose in the body out of contentment, love and acceptance, 19) and 'he lives the life of the inhabitants of Paradise', 20) and perfect vision. This makes a total of twenty.

The first [two] of these belong to Adamhood, the next three to contraction, the next four to expansion, the one after that to prophethood, the next two to the spirit, the next five to science, and the last three to apostleship.

.....

Now that you've heard this, know that eighteen of these twenty are divided among the *litterae productionis* or the soft letters (*ḥurūf al-madd wa'l-līn*), namely *alif*, *wāw* and *yā*<sup>3</sup>. Six belong to *alif*, six to *wāw*, and six to *yā*<sup>3</sup>. Each one of these possesses this number because the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—extended the length of vowels by as much as six degrees. Sometimes a length of three *alifs*, then again a length of four *alifs*, another time a length of five *alifs*, and sometimes a length of six *alifs*. But this scale of gradation is only approximate and not absolute.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the *ḥāfiẓ* and shaykh of the Qur'ānic reciters, Ibn al-Jazarī—God, the Mighty and the Glorious, have mercy on him—agrees with this in the *Nashr* (320/1). A resumé of what he says when he treats the degrees of vowel lengthening (*al-madd*) is as follows:<sup>49</sup>

The first degree is 'brevity (*qasr*)' which has the value of one *alif*. And Ibn al-Jazarī attributes this form of recitation to Ibn Kathīr<sup>50</sup> and Abū Ja'far<sup>51</sup>—in detail.

The second degree is a little above 'brevity', its value being that of two *alifs* or one and a half *alifs*. (175) They are referred to as

<sup>49</sup> *Nashr* I, pp. 310 ff.

<sup>50</sup> *Nashr* I, p. 318, l. 6; on him see fn. 26 above.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*; probably Abū Ja'far b. Ayyūb al-Muqri'; GAS I, p. 39.

‘increment upon increment (*ziyāda ba<sup>c</sup>d ziyāda*)’, ‘intensification without saturation (*al-tamkīn min ghayr ishbā<sup>c</sup>*)’, or ‘intermediate increment (*al-ziyāda al-mutawassīṭa*)’. And he attributes this form of recitation to al-Dūrī.<sup>52</sup> Others have attributed it to Qālūn.<sup>53</sup>

The third degree is a little above the previous one, being known as ‘the middle degree (*al-mutawassīṭ*)’. Its value is three or two and a half or two *alifs*. The last number is given by someone who thinks the second degree consists of one and a half *alifs*. And he attributes this form of recitation to al-Kisā<sup>3</sup>ī.

The fourth degree is a little above the previous one and its value is four *alifs*, as well as three and a half or three *alifs*. And he attributes this form of recitation to ʿĀṣim and Ibn ʿĀmir.

The fifth degree is a little above the previous one and its value is five *alifs*, as well as four and a half or four *alifs*. And he attributes this form of recitation to Ḥamza and Warsh.<sup>54</sup>

The sixth degree is a little above the previous one. It’s referred to as ‘expansion (*taṣṭīf*)’ and it has a value of six *alifs*. Abū’l-Qāsim<sup>55</sup> mentions it on the authority of a group of Qur’ānic reciters (*qurrā*) and attributes this form of recitation to Warsh.<sup>56</sup> The fifth degree he says is peculiar to Ḥamza. Ibn al-Jazarī disagrees with him about this. Ibn al-Jazarī then mentions two other degrees, one of them being before ‘brevity’ and called ‘amputation (*al-batr*)’. This consists of omitting the *litterae productionis* and eliminating them from speech. And he reports that Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī<sup>57</sup> accused of error anyone who adopted this form of recitation. He goes on to give an excellent explanation of this point. In his judgement the degree of ‘brevity’ is indispensable and it isn’t permissible to omit the *litterae productionis*. He mentions the other degree as being located between the fifth and sixth degrees. He maintains it’s best not to count it [among the others]. The result of his discussion—God the Sublime have mercy on him—is that the degrees come to six, which is what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him!

52 GAS I, p. 13; died 240/846.

53 GAS I, p. 12; died 220/835.

54 GAS I, p. 11; died 197/812.

55 Abū’l-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī is meant; *Aʿlām* V, p. 180; died 590/1194; cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 175; and ftn. 84 below.

56 *Shāṭibiyya*, pp. 12 f.

57 See ftn. 79 below.

(176) After these points Ibn al-Jazarī—God the Sublime have mercy on him—sets forth in detail why this calculation of *alifs* is a general calculation without precision.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that if I were to enter further into this subject and present its proofs, we'd stray from our purpose. The question receives assistance from the principles of jurisprudence (*al-uṣūl*) since, among others, Ibn al-Ḥājjib<sup>58</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—says: 'Lengthening vowels (*al-madd*) and suchlike haven't been handed down with multiple chains of transmission (*mutawātir*), and whoever understands *al-tawātur* and its conditions, and the question of their being met in the case of the degrees of vowel lengthening, has fathomed the profundity of the matter.'<sup>59</sup>

Now let's return to our subject. We have the following to say. **Firstly**, as for the six parts which belong to the *alif*: they are perfection of internal form, the spirit's repose in the body in contentment, the sense organ diffused throughout the body, perfection of the internal senses, loathing the false, and the settling of the good in the body.

Likewise, the lengthened *alif* is of two kinds: 1) sometimes it occurs in a word which expresses the self (*al-nafs*) and what pertains to the self, as for instance: *innā āmannā*. Here the lengthened *alif* occurs in a personal pronoun and it stands for the self of the speaker. 2) And sometimes it occurs in a word whose meaning is outside the body of the person speaking, as for instance: *min al-samā' mā'*.

If it occurs in a word which stands for the speaker's self, the first degree, which is 'brevity' and has the value of one *alif*, possesses perfection of internal perception.

(177) The second degree, which has the value of two *alifs*, possesses repose of the spirit, and this in addition to perfection of internal perception which belongs to the first degree.

The third degree possesses the diffused sense organ, in addition to what belongs to the second and the third degrees.

The fourth degree possesses perfection of the internal senses, in addition to what belongs to the previous three degrees.

The fifth degree possesses loathing the false, in addition to what belongs to the previous four degrees.

<sup>58</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 132, XVIII; the title of his work isn't given but the *Kāfiya* is probably meant; he died 646/1249.

<sup>59</sup> Not found in the *Kāfiya*.

And the sixth degree possesses the settling of the good in the body, in addition to what belongs to the previous five degrees.

Thus the first degree has one part, the second degree two parts, the third three, the fourth four, the fifth five, and the sixth six parts.

And if the *alif* occurs in a word outside the body [of the speaker], the first degree possesses perfection of internal form. The second possesses that part as well as loathing the false. The third possesses the previous parts, plus settling of the good in the body. The fourth possesses [all] that as well as the diffused faculty. The fifth all that as well as perfection of the internal perception. And the sixth all that as well as the spirit's repose in the body in contentment.

The secret behind starting off in 1) with perfection of internal perception and in 2) with perfection of internal form is that when the *alif* occurs in a word of the self (*al-nafs*), the perfection of internal perception points toward the interior. Adamhood is the carpet of perfection upon which it (the self) comes forth.<sup>60</sup> And if speech is self-oriented (*nafsānī*), its carpet is self-oriented Adamhood. But if speech isn't concerned with self-oriented matters as in the case of *al-samā'* and *al-mā'*, the Adamhood [involved] isn't self-oriented.

Nor is there any doubt but that perfection of internal form derives from improvement of the internal natural disposition from which arises pleasantness of sound [in pronouncing] such words as *al-samā'* and *al-mā'*, by contrast with perfection of internal perception which derives from improvement of the faculties of the self (*al-nafs*).

**Secondly**, as for the six parts which belong to the *wāw*, they are: lack of shame, inclination for one's own kind, opening of the external senses, opening of the internal senses, not feeling pains from physical objects, and the power of penetration.

(178) a) If the lengthened *wāw* occurs in something which is outside the body (the person) such as: *li-yasū'ū wujūhuhum* (17/7), the first degree, which has the quantity of one *wāw*, possesses lack of shame. The second, which has the quantity of two *wāws*, possesses the same, as well as inclination for one's own kind. The third possesses lack of shame and inclination, as well as opening of the external senses. The fourth possesses lack of shame, inclination, opening of the external senses, as well as opening of the internal senses. The fifth possesses lack of shame, inclination, opening of the

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<sup>60</sup> Meaning uncertain.



external senses, opening of the internal senses, as well as lack of feeling pains from physical objects. And the sixth possesses lack of shame, inclination, opening of the external senses, opening of the internal senses, lack of feeling pains from physical objects, as well as the power of penetration. Thus every degree includes what precedes it, as well as what is added to it.

b) If the *wāw* occurs in a word which, for instance, expresses something like: *qālū āmannā* (7/121), then the first degree possesses the opening of the internal senses. The second degree, in addition to that, possesses the opening of the external senses. The third, in addition to that, the inclination for one's own kind. The fourth, in addition to that, lack of shame. The fifth, in addition to what preceded, lack of feeling pains from physical objects. The sixth, in addition to what preceded, the power of penetration. Thus every degree includes what precedes it, as well as what is added to it. The secret behind this is clear. The two *wāws* contain the one *wāw*, and the three *wāws* contain the two *wāws*—as is the case with the *alifs* and the *yā's*.

**Thirdly**, as for the six parts that belong to the *yā'*, they are: lack of squandering, limiting the direction to the forward direction, knowledge of the final outcome, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of both worlds, and living a life like the inhabitants of Paradise.

a) If the *yā'* is on the inside [of a group of words], as in: *innī ulqiya ilayya* (27/29), then the first degree possesses knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of both worlds. The second degree possesses the same, as well as lack of squandering. The third all that, as well as knowledge of the final outcome. The fourth all that, as well as limiting (179) the directions. The fifth all that, as well as knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn. And the sixth all that, as well as living a life like the inhabitants of Paradise.

b) If the *yā'* is on the outside, as in: *wa-ḥi anḥusikum* (51/21), then the first degree possesses limiting the directions. The second degree possesses the same, as well as knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn. The third all that, as well as living a life like the inhabitants of Paradise. The fourth all that, as well as knowledge of the final outcome. The fifth all that, as well as

lack of squandering. And the sixth all that, as well as knowledge of the sciences dealing with the affairs of both worlds.

This is an explanation of the eighteen parts and an explanation of the degrees into which they're divided.

As for the two parts which are left over that complete twenty, they belong to vision (*mushāhada*) and perfection of loftiness. The *rasm* of the noble Qur'ān came by virtue of their lights and the wonder of their secrets. And the letters which are written but not pronounced such as the *wāw* in *ṣlwt*, etc. [a list of words containing silent *wāw* and *yā'*], each of them is a secret from the secrets of these two parts. But if the meaning of the word is something perceptible and visible on the outside like *Mūsā* (Moses), etc. [list of examples], what's contained in it is the secret of vision (*mushāhada*).

If its meaning is something grasped mentally and not perceptible to the senses such as *hadyhm*, etc. [list of examples], what's contained in it is the secret of the station of loftiness.

.....

(180) Then I asked: 'Does the *rasm* of the Qur'ān as just described come from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—or from our lords the Companions of the Prophet—God be pleased with them—?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It comes from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and it was he who ordered the scribes among the Companions—God be pleased with them—to write it down in the known form. Nor did the Companions—God be pleased with them—add to what they heard from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—or subtract from it.'

And I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that there's a group of religious scholars—God have mercy on them—who make concessions regarding the matter of *rasm*. They say the *rasm* of the Qur'ān represents the agreed usage of the Companions—God be pleased with them—who followed the way the Quraysh wrote in pre-Islamic times (*al-jāhiliyya*). Al-Farrā<sup>61</sup> even says about their writing *al-rbw* with *wāw*: 'This they did themselves, because they learned writing from the people of Ḥīra and the latter pronounced the *wāw* in

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61 'Ibrīziana', p. 132, XIX; died 200/822.

*al-rbw*<sup>62</sup> and wrote it as they pronounced it. As for the Quraysh,<sup>62</sup> they pronounced it with *alif*, and their writing it with *wāw* was in compliance with the pronunciation of others and in imitation of them.<sup>63</sup>

The judge Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī<sup>64</sup> even says—in his book the *Intiṣār*: ‘The strokes [in the *rasm*] are signs and marks which function like hints, gestures in finger reckoning and symbols. Every *rasm* which signifies a word and reports its pronunciation must be correct, and the writer achieves correctness with it in any way he can.’<sup>65</sup>

Let’s transmit what he says in his own words—though this requires some time.

Where al-Bāqillānī—God the Sublime have mercy on him—discusses ‘Uthmān’s statement: ‘In the text of the Qur’ān there’s mistaken usage (*lahn*) which the Arabs correct with their tongues’, he says the following: ‘It’s permissible to interpret ‘Uthmān’s words: “I see mistaken usage in it which the Arabs correct with their tongues” as meaning where the writer has omitted something in the Qur’ān and shortened something in places and added letters in other places.

(181) If the writer had written it as it’s pronounced and according to its form, it would be more correct and suitable, and less obscure to someone for whom the words aren’t in his native language. And when he says: “The Arabs will correct it with their tongues”, he means that they don’t observe what’s written in the *rasm* but they recite it according to its pronunciation and form. An example of such letters is when they write the words *al-ṣalwt*, *al-zakwt* and *al-ḥaywt* with *wāw* [instead of *ā*] which isn’t how they’re pronounced. The same is true of *Isma‘īl*, *Iṣḥaq*, *Ibrahīm*, *raḥman*, and *malik* where they’ve omitted the *alif* in the *rasm* which isn’t how they’re pronounced. Similarly, they’ve added the *alif* in words like: *qālū*<sup>66</sup>, *kharajū*<sup>67</sup> and *kafarū*<sup>68</sup>, etc., but the *alif* isn’t retained in pronunciation. In ‘Uthmān’s view—God be pleased with him—writing these words

<sup>62</sup> On Hira cf. EI s.n.; it was the seat of the Arab Lakhmid kings in Iraq. The Quraysh were the dominant tribe in Mecca; cf. EI, s.v. Quraysh.

<sup>63</sup> Not found in al-Farrā’, *Ma‘ānī al-Qur’ān*.

<sup>64</sup> On him see p. 196, fn. 208.

<sup>65</sup> *Intiṣār*, p. 376, ll. 2-5; the long quotation that follows occurs in the *Fath*., Chpt.: *Faḍā’il al-Qur’ān*, p. 204, no. 17-52; see fn. 73 below.

as they're pronounced is more suitable and correct. If someone were to recite them as they're written, he'd speak incorrectly and erroneously. However, °Uthmān and other Companions besides him knew that the Arabs don't recite them according to the *rasm*. That's why he said: "The Arabs will correct it..."

The correctness of this explanation is demonstrated by what's been transmitted by Abū °Ubayd<sup>66</sup> from Ḥajjāj,<sup>67</sup> from Hārūn b. Mūsā,<sup>68</sup> from al-Zubayr b. al-Ḥārith,<sup>69</sup> and from °Ikrima<sup>70</sup> who said: "When copies of the text of the Qur'ān were written, they were shown to °Uthmān—God be pleased with him—and he found mistaken usage in them. None the less, he said: (182) 'Don't change it. The Arabs will correct it. If the copyist had been from the Thaqīf, and the one dictating from the Hudhayl,<sup>71</sup> these letters wouldn't be found in the text.'" What he meant by this—but God knows best—is that the Thaqīf were more discerning in spelling and adhered more strictly to writing according to the pronunciation of words. In this they were more learned than anyone else. And the Hudhayl make frequent use of the *hamza* in their speech. They articulate it fully and pronounce it clearly. If the *hamza* appears clearly in the pronunciation of the person dictating, the copyist hears it and represents it as it's pronounced. Afterwards the reciter has a choice. If he wishes, he can soften the *hamza* and drop it as in the idiom of the Quraysh. Or he can produce it as in the idiom of the Hudhayl. If this explanation weren't as we've presented it, there wouldn't be any sense in mentioning the Thaqīf and the Hudhayl.

Thus it's established that the mistaken usage °Uthmān was referring to is what occurred on the part of the copyist by not following the pronunciation, but °Uthmān didn't change it. He ordered them not to change it because he saw that it had become widespread and was so frequent in the texts of the Qur'ān that to pursue it would require much time. And it would be necessary to destroy the texts that had been submitted to him and copy new ones.

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<sup>66</sup> See fn. 17 above.

<sup>67</sup> Ḥajjāj b. Arṭā; *A'lām* II, p. 168; died 145/762.

<sup>68</sup> *A'lām* VIII, p. 63; died 170/786.

<sup>69</sup> The text has *Hryth*; the *Intiṣār* has *b. Hryth*; on al-Zubayr cf. TT III, p. 314, no. 582.

<sup>70</sup> GAS I, p. 24; ThG II, p. 655.

<sup>71</sup> Arab tribes with their own differences in pronunciation; cf. EI, s.v. Thaqīf and s.v. Hudhayl.

This would entail immense difficulty and trouble. It would also be difficult for the people he appointed to copy the texts of the Qurʾān, for they were only accustomed to write in this way. Or he feared he'd estrange them through defamation of their writing and slandering them with regard to their *rasm*. So he left it as it was in the knowledge that the Arabs would never pronounce it according to its *rasm*.

Now you may object to this response and say: "You've reached the point where you claim that the script and *rasm* of the Qurʾān's text (183) contain error and what's incorrect and what should have been changed, and that the people [of that time] permitted this, left it as it was, and justified it. That amounts on their part to a consensus in favor of error, and confirmation of what isn't right."

To this I reply that what you say isn't necessarily so because God the Sublime imposed on the Muslim community guardianship of the Qurʾān and its words. They weren't to add to it or to subtract from it one letter or change the order of its words, but recite it the same way it had been recited for them. As for writing it, God didn't impose on the Muslim community anything in this regard. God didn't assign the writers of the Qurʾān and the copyists of the texts of the Qurʾān one particular *rasm* and oblige them to use it to the exclusion of any other. Such an obligation would only be grasped through revelation and explicit prescription. But it doesn't occur in the Book's text or in its implied sense that the Qurʾān's *rasm* and its script can only be one specific kind, subject to one defined limit which may not be overstepped. Nor is there anything in the text of the Sunna that imposes this and indicates it either. And again nothing in the consensus of the Muslim community prescribes this, nor do the legal deductions by analogy indicate it. Rather the Sunna indicates it's allowed to use whatever *rasm* is easy. For the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—ordered them to record it with a *rasm* but didn't specify for them a particular kind, nor did he forbid anyone from writing it down. That's why scripts of the copies of the Qurʾān have varied from one another. There were those who wrote the words according to their pronunciation, and there were those who added and subtracted [letters] in the knowledge that this was particular usage and that the people were aware of the situation. For this very reason it was allowed to write the Qurʾān in Kufic

letters and in “the first script”,<sup>72</sup> and to present the *lām* in the shape of the *kāf* and to write crooked *alifs*. Other ways of writing were also allowed. And the copyist was permitted to make a copy of the Qurʾān in the ancient script and spelling, as well as in the new spelling and scripts. And it was allowed to use a mixture of the two. Since the scripts of Qurʾān texts and many of the letters were varied and different in form, and since the people allowed all of this and allowed everyone to write in his accustomed way and as he found easier, more familiar and more suitable—without any offense or disavowal being involved—it was understood that no special defined limit was imposed on the people in this regard, as was imposed on them with regard to Qurʾānic recitation and calling to prayer (*adhān*).

The reason for this is that the strokes are signs and marks which function as hints, (184) gestures in finger reckoning and symbols. Every *rasm* which signifies a word and reports its pronunciation must be correct, and the writer achieves correctness with it in any way he can.

In short, everyone who claims that people are obliged to use a special *rasm* is himself obliged to present the proof for his claim. But how can he do so?<sup>73</sup> These are the words of the judge Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī—in summarized form.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘Neither the Companions, nor anyone else, have anything to do with the *rasm* of the noble Qurʾān—not even to the extent of a single hair. It’s been fixed by the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and it was he who ordered them to write it down in its known form, with some letters added and some removed, and this because of secrets which minds are unable to fathom. Neither the Arabs in the pre-Islamic age, nor the people of faith from the other religious communities were familiar with this in their religions. They didn’t find their way to any of it through their understanding. It’s a secret among His secrets with which God distinguished His noble Book, but not the other heavenly books. No such *rasm* is found in the Torah, or in the Gospels, or in any other heavenly books. Just as the

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<sup>72</sup> *al-khaṭṭ al-awwal*.

<sup>73</sup> This long citation starting with the words: ‘In the text of the Qurʾān there’s mistaken usage’ corresponds to *Intiṣār*, p. 372, l. 9 to p. 376, l. 8; al-Lamaṭī shortens and alters the text.

composition of the Qurʾān is a miracle, its *rasm* is also a miracle. How can minds find their way to the secret behind adding the *alif* to *miʾa*<sup>74</sup> but not in *fiʾa* or to the secret behind adding the *yāʾ* in *bi-ayyidin* in God the Sublime's words: *waʾl-samāʾa banaynāhā bi-ayyidin* (51/47)?

Or how can minds attain to the secret behind the *alif* in *sʿwʾ* in God the Sublime's words: *waʾlladhīna saʿawʾ fī āyātīnā muʿājjizīna ulāʾika aṣḥāb al-jahīm* (22/51), whereas it isn't added in God the Sublime's words: *waʾlladhīna saʿaw fī āyātīnā muʿājjizīna ulāʾika lahum ʿadhāb min rijz alīm* (34/5)?

(185) And the secret behind its being added in God the Sublime's words: *fa-ʿaqarūʾl-nāqata wa-ʿatawʾ ʿan amri rabbiḥim* (7/77), but left out in God the Sublime's words: *wa-ʿataw ʿutuwwan kabīran* (25/21)?

And the secret behind its being added in God the Sublime's words: *aw yaʿfuwāʾlladhī bi-yadiḥī ʿuqdatuʾl-nikāḥi* (2/237), and left out in: *fa-ulāʾika ʿasāʾllāha an yaʿfuwa ʿanhum* (4/99)?

And the secret behind its being added in: *āmanūʾ, kafarūʾ* and *kharajūʾ* but left out in *bāʾū, jāʾū, tabūʾ* and *fa-inna fāʾū*?

Or how can minds attain the reason for omitting the *alif* in some similar words, such as *qurʾnan* (12/2, 43/3), and retaining it everywhere else? The same is the case with retaining the *alif* after the *wāw* in *samawāt* (41/12), while dropping it elsewhere. Likewise, the *alif* is retained in *al-mīʿād* throughout but omitted in (8/42), and retained in *sirājan* wherever it occurs but omitted in (21/46). It's the same with pronouncing *tāʾ* and joining it [to a word] as in: *rahma, niʿma, qurra* and *shajara*. (186) In some places they're written with *tāʾ* and in other places with *hāʾ*.

And such is the case with *al-ṣalāt* and *al-ḥayāt*. In some places they're written with *wāw*, as for instance: *aqīmūʾl-ṣalwta, al-ḥaywt al-dunyā*, and *ʿalā ḥaywtin*, but in other places with *alif*, as in: *qul inna ṣalātī wa-nuskī* (6/162), *kullun qad ʿalima ṣalātahū wa-tasbīḥahū* (24/41), *wa-lā tajhar bi-ṣalātika* (17/110), and *adhhabtum ṭayyibātikum fī ḥayātikumūʾl-dunyā* (46/20). There are innumerable other examples like this.

All this has to do with divine secrets and purposes of the Prophet. They're hidden from the people because they belong to the internal

<sup>74</sup> We transliterate as *miʾa* whereas in Arabic script the *hamza* is preceded by an *alif*, though the word is still pronounced like *fiʾa*.

secrets which can only be understood through divine illumination. (187) They're like the words and single letters at the beginning of surahs. The latter contain great secrets and many higher meanings. All the higher meanings and secrets in the surah which has these letters at the beginning are contained in these letters. Everything in the surah *Ṣād* is contained in the letter *ṣād*. And everything in *Qāf*, *Nūn*, *Yā-Sīn* and *Ṭā-Hā*, as well as in others, is contained in these symbols. Most people can't find their way to these secrets and don't understand anything of the divine meanings which have been alluded to. One group of people thought the letters were the names of the surahs. Another group thought that they alluded to the letters' numerical values. And another group thought they were stray letters that had no meanings behind them. All these people have been barred from knowing the radiant and wondrous meanings contained in the letters. And the same is true about the *rasm* [of the Qur'ān] with regard to each individual letter.

Now when it comes to the view of someone who says the Companions—God be pleased with them—are the ones who adopted the *rasm* in question, the falseness of what he says is obvious. The noble Qur'ān was written in the time of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and in the Prophet's presence in one particular form. At that time what the Companions adopted as usage—God be pleased with them—was either that very form or a different one. If it was the very same form, conventional usage is invalid because it's invention and innovation. Moreover, the early time period precludes this and would necessitate that they comply [with the Prophet]. Whoever ascribes their compliance at that time to conventional usage is like someone who says the Companions agreed there would be five prayers and that, for instance, the number of prayer units (*raka'āt*) would be four. On the other hand, if [what they adopted] was another form, how could the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—have had the writing done in a form like consistent *rasm* (*qiyāsī*) for example, while the Companions opposed him and wrote in a different form? This is incorrect for two reasons:

Firstly, because it accuses the Companions and prominent men of religious guidance—God be pleased with them—of opposing the Prophet. This is simply absurd.



Secondly, because the whole Muslim community, the Companions as well as everyone else, have agreed that it isn't allowed to add a letter to the Qur'ān or to subtract a letter from it. Writing is one of the four kinds of existence and what's found between the two book covers is the word of God. Now if the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—presented a form of writing that added the *alif* in *al-rahmān* and *al-ʿālamīn* but didn't do so in *miʿa*, *kafarū* and *kharaḥū*, and didn't add the *yāʾ* (188) in *bi-ayyidīn* and *a-fa-in mitta*, etc.—some of which we mentioned previously and some of which we didn't—and the Companions—God be pleased with them—did the opposite to what he did and opposed him, they'd necessarily have been freely engaged in making additions to the Qur'ān and deletions from it. Far be it from them to do such a thing! They'd have gone against what they, as well as others, agreed was forbidden, and doubt would necessarily enter into everything found between the two book covers. For if we allowed that it contained some letters other than what was in the Prophet's knowledge and with him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and consequently not revelation and not from God, and that we didn't know which ones they are, we'd have doubts about all of it. And if we allowed that a Companion had added in his writing a letter which wasn't revelation, we'd be obliged to allow that another Companion had deleted a letter that belongs to revelation—since there's no difference between these two. At this point the firm hold of Islam would be utterly undone.

If it's correct to claim an agreement of usage on the part of the Companions—God be pleased with them—the writing of the noble Qur'ān would have taken place during their epoch, after the death of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

But it's a fact that the *rasm* was established by the Prophet and not agreed by the Companions, and that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—ordered it to be written down in its known form.'

I said: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't know how to write, for God the Sublime has described him as follows: "You did not recite any book before this and you did not write it with your right hand. Those who speak falsehood would have had doubts" (29/48).'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't know writing through

conventional usage and instruction by the people but through divine illumination. Indeed, he knew it and he knew much more besides. How could it be otherwise? The unlettered Friends of God from his noble religious community who have received illumination know the scripts of the other religious communities and nations since the time of Adam—peace be upon him—and the scripts of all the languages. And this is by virtue of the blessing of the Prophet's light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! So how is it with the Prophet himself—blessings and peace be upon him!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The person who's received illumination from God and looks at the shapes of the *rasm* that are on (189) the tablets of the Qur'ān and then looks at the shapes of the writing on the Well-guarded Tablet,<sup>75</sup> finds a great resemblance between them. He sees on the Well-guarded Tablet the additions of the *alif* in *kafarū*' and *āmanū*', etc., as previously described. He understands the secrets contained in all of this and he knows that these secrets are beyond the capacity of minds.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I heard from our Shaykh who was among the unlettered—God be pleased with him—the secrets of everything previously described concerning *kafarū*', *mi'a* and *suchlike*. I compared this with what the authorities and eminent scholars of *rasm* say about it and found that, by God, the weightiest view is what the Shaykh said—God give us profit through him! Perhaps God will give us success—through His grace and His generosity—in dictating a good deal of it. Our understanding had never been satisfied with what the authorities on *rasm* say, for they only treated a tiny part of it. We still had doubts about the matter of *rasm* and attributing it to the Companions—God be pleased with them! But finally the Shaykh—God have mercy on him—removed this problem for us with his words—God give him a most excellent reward on our behalf!

Then by way of testing him, I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—concerning the added *yā*' in *bi-ayyidin*, knowing he was able to answer, even if he hadn't learned by heart so much as the *ḥizb* 'Sabbih': 'Is it the first or the second *yā*' that's been added?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The second *yā*'.' I attempted to raise doubts in him but he insisted it was the second

<sup>75</sup> See fn. 38 above; among other things the Tablet contains the archetypal text of the Qur'ān.

one. And Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Kharrāz<sup>76</sup> says the same: ‘The second *yāʾ* in *bi-ayyidin* occurs in order to distinguish it from *al-ayd*.’

And I asked him about which was added in *malāʾihī*, the *alif* or the *yāʾ*.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The *alif* is added.’ And I asked about other things in this domain and about their secrets. He gave correct replies, as if he were an adept among those who’ve memorized the Qurʾān.

Then I asked: ‘Concerning what you said about the *rasm* being fixed<sup>77</sup> [by the Prophet], an opponent could object: “We concede this much but why isn’t it possible for the noble Qurʾān to be written with *al-rasm* (190) *al-qiyaṣī* and for the *alif* to be put in and the other additions to be omitted. What could be harmful in this?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The eternal word contains secrets and the way it’s written is part of these secrets. Whoever writes the Qurʾān in the fixed way renders it with all its secrets. Whoever adopts consistent writing (*al-kitāba al-qiyaṣiyya*) diminishes its secrets and what he writes are words of his own, not the words of revelation.’

Then he formulated a similitude—God be pleased with him—saying: ‘Let’s imagine a man who writes the defective verb *kāna* with *wāw* like this: *kawāna*, and by writing it that way he wishes to express a secret which he explains to some people but not to others. A person who’s uninformed of the secret then comes along. He doesn’t think writing the *wāw* conveys a secret with regard to the meaning. So he says: “I’ll write it with *alif* because the meaning is the same. The proper way to write it is with *alif*. So I’ll write it that way.” But someone who knows the secret tells him: “You’ve left out the secret and written another *kāna*, not the one the man intended. For he wrote it with *wāw* and placed the *alif* above it in order to express *kawn* and *takwīn*, as if by the changed form *kawāna* he wanted to write *kāna* and *kawwana*, as in ‘Zayd was’ (*kāna Zayd*) and ‘God—He is mighty and glorious—caused him to be’ (*wa-kawwanahū’llāh—ʿazza wa-jalla*).” The same is the case with

<sup>76</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 189; in all likelihood Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Kharrāz is meant; he was active around 703/1303 and wrote on the Qurʾānic sciences; GAL II, p. 248; *Aʿlām* VII, p. 33.

<sup>77</sup> fixed: *tawqīfiyyan*; on this question see Appendix, p. 931.

someone who writes *al-ṣalāt*, *al-zakāt* and *al-ḥayāt*, without *wāw*. He leaves out their secrets.'

I asked: 'If the *rasm* was fixed through a revelation from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—like the words of the Qur'ān, why wasn't this handed down with multiple chains of transmission so that doubt about it would be removed and hearts would then find peace, as with the words of the Qur'ān? Indeed, no letter that has been handed down with multiple chains of transmission is subject to dispute and confusion. The *rasm*, however, has been handed down in traditions attested only once, as is known from books written on the subject. Due to its being transmitted through this category of traditions, confusion has resulted among the transmitters regarding many aspects of the matter. But how can the Muslim community lose anything from revelation?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Muslim community hasn't lost anything from revelation. The Qur'ān—praise be to God—is protected as far as its words and its *rasm*. The people of divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*), witnessing and direct vision have preserved its words as well as its *rasm*, and not so much as a single hair from it has been lost. And this they perceive through witnessing and direct vision which (191) stands above unbroken tradition. Others have preserved its words that reach them through unbroken tradition. And their disagreement about some letters in the *rasm* isn't reprehensible, nor does it cause any loss to the Muslim community—just as the ignorance of ordinary people and their not learning the Qur'ān's words by heart does no harm to the Qur'ān.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would comment that what the Shaykh said here—God be pleased with him—is very good indeed and the ultimate of divine knowledge. He expressed many other secrets and lights in his talk—God be pleased with him—which we haven't written down for fear of being tedious.

As for the *ḥadīth* transmitted from ʿUthmān: '...that there's mistaken usage in the Qur'ān which the Arabs correct with their tongues', this is a *ḥadīth* with an incomplete chain of transmission (*mursal*). And besides being *mursal*, there's confusion in its chain of transmission (*isnād*) due to the obscurity of some of the transmitters in its *isnād*. The judge Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī]—God have mercy on him—is among those who reject this *ḥadīth* in his previously cited

book.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, other religious scholars reject it, including Abū °Amr al-Dānī,<sup>79</sup> the expert on Qurʾānic recitation (*al-muqriʿ*)—God the Sublime have mercy on him—in his *Muqniʿ* which deals with *rasm*. At the end of the *Muqniʿ* are the words:

‘What do you say if someone asks you about the tradition you and your colleagues have reported from Yaḥyā b. Yaʿmur<sup>80</sup> and from °Ikrima, the client of Ibn °Abbās, concerning °Uthmān—God have mercy on him: “That when copies of the Qurʾān were made, they were shown to °Uthmān and he found mistaken usage of letters in them. He said: ‘Leave them! The Arabs will correct them, or will understand them,<sup>81</sup> in their own tongue.’”—? For to all appearances this indicates error in the *rasm*.

He said:<sup>82</sup> “I reply that in my view a tradition of this kind is no [real] evidence. There are two reasons why it offers no valid proof:

The first is that besides having a muddled *isnād* and confusion in its words, its *isnād* is incomplete (*mursal*), because Ibn Yaʿmur and °Ikrima didn’t hear anything from °Uthmān—God the Sublime have mercy on him—nor did they meet him.

Secondly, the external sense of the words precludes its coming from °Uthmān in view of the slander against him that they contain—given his high place in religion and in Islam, the intensity of his striving and his concern (192) to offer good advice for the betterment of the Muslim community. Thus it’s impossible that °Uthmān would undertake to collect Qurʾān texts together with all the virtuous, pious and dutiful Companions, by way of looking after them and removing disagreement among them over the Qurʾān, and then, despite this, leave for them mistaken usage and error in it which someone who came after him and undoubtedly lacked his capacity and scope would have to alter. No one can possibly say such a thing and believe such a thing.”<sup>83</sup> This is the sense of what he said.

After that he dealt with the tradition’s *isnād* based on Yaḥyā b. Yaʿmur and °Ikrima. Read about the two of them in Abū °Amr al-

<sup>78</sup> See p. 196, fn. 208.

<sup>79</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 132, XX; died 444/1053.

<sup>80</sup> GAS I, p. 5; died 89/707.

<sup>81</sup> The *Muqniʿ* has: *sa-tuʿribuhā*.

<sup>82</sup> I.e. *al-Dānī*.

<sup>83</sup> *Muqniʿ*, p. 124, l. 3 to l. -3.

Dānī and read the words in the *Intiṣār* [of al-Bāqillānī] which goes into rejecting the *ḥadīth* at greater length.

And Abū'l-Qāsim al-Shāṭibī<sup>84</sup>—God have mercy on him—says in the *ʿAqīla* (verse):

‘If one cites ʿUthmān as saying: “The Arabs let their tongues Correct what’s mistaken in it”—this isn’t widely accepted.’<sup>85</sup>

Al-Jaʿbarī<sup>86</sup>—God have mercy on him—says in his commentary [on the *ʿAqīla*] after he cites the *ḥadīth*: ‘Then the author [al-] responds with the same reply one finds in the *Muqniʿ*, that the *ḥadīth* isn’t authentic since its *isnād* is confused and truncated. I would add that its words as well contain confusion, because to say: “You’ve done well and handsomely, yet I see mistaken usage in it, etc.”, is [a kind of] praise. But how can he praise them if they’ve done badly? ʿUthmān’s purpose was to make them come back to the Qurʾān. If its correctness depended on them, however, then this would amount to turning in a circle. If by copy of the Qurʾān (*muṣḥaf*) ʿUthmān meant the whole genre, then what was said would follow. Or if he meant an individual copy, we don’t see its difference as being one of mistaken usage (*lahn*). But this indicated a lack of correctness in every individual copy of the Qurʾān. Eloquence and writing arose among the Quraysh. Others are a branch of this. And how can a branch be made into the root? This is a contradiction.’ These are the words of al-Jaʿbarī—God the Sublime have mercy on him!

If the *ḥadīth* itself were rejected, the matter would be simple. How excellent is the imam Abū'l-Ḥasan (193) al-Qābisī<sup>87</sup>—God have mercy on him—where he opposed the *ustādh* Abū Bakr b. Fūrak<sup>88</sup>—God have mercy on him—when the latter was giving a response about difficult *ḥadīths* which are false. Al-Qābisī said: ‘One doesn’t take the trouble to respond about *ḥadīths* unless they’re “authentic”. As for “the false”, the fact that they’re false is sufficient for rejecting them.’

Now we come to the words of the judge Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī—God have mercy on him: ‘There’s nothing in the Book or in the

<sup>84</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 132, XXI; died 590/1194; see here fn. 55.

<sup>85</sup> *ʿAqīla*, p. 3.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 132, XXII; died 732/1333.

<sup>87</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 132, XXIII; died 403/1012.

<sup>88</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 132, XXIV; died 406/1015; the *Mushkil al-ḥadīth* is probably meant; cf. Introduction in printed edition, pp. 42-44.

Sunna, or in the consensus or in deduction by analogy (*qiyās*), which indicates that one must follow the *rasm*.<sup>89</sup>

And the response to him is known from what has already been presented. His argument is based on the view that the *rasm* is agreed upon usage, whereas it was [authoritatively] fixed. Proof that this is an obligatory belief comes from God the Sublime's words in the Book: 'Take whatever the Apostle brings you and abandon whatever he forbids you!' (59/7).

If there's another *rasm* that doesn't do justice to what the Law-giver [Muḥammad] intended, it's replaced by the *rasm* which the Apostle brought—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and this must be followed. The command in God the Sublime's word: 'Take!' expresses this necessity with regard to our problem, when no *rasm* is found that does justice to the meaning.

The Sunna consists of the Prophet's actions—blessings and peace be upon him—which are what he established, as well as his words which are his commands to the people. And he commanded them to write down the Qurʾān in its known form. If someone claims the Prophet didn't command them to do this, he doesn't contest what the Prophet established—blessings and peace be upon him! And what the Prophet established which isn't replaced by something else imposes that thing and makes it necessary. The writings of the authorities in independent theological interpretation (*ijtihād*) are filled (194) to overflowing with this point, authorities such as the imam Mālik, Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, and others among the scholars who exercised *ijtihād*.

It's transmitted by the ḥāfiẓ Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī in the *Kitāb al-Muqniʿ*: 'Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik b. al-Ḥasan<sup>90</sup> related to us from ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAlī<sup>91</sup>—from al-Miqdām b. Talīd<sup>92</sup>—from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam<sup>93</sup>—from Ashhab:<sup>94</sup> 'Mālik—God the Sublime have mercy on him—was asked: 'If someone has a copy of the Qurʾān written for him, in your view should it be written in the

<sup>89</sup> *Intiṣār*, p. 375, ll. 5-8; see p. 196, ftn 208.

<sup>90</sup> Probably *Ghāyat al-nihāya* I, p. 468, no. 1955.

<sup>91</sup> Probably *Aʿlām* IV, p. 22; died *circa* 498/1165; al-Jazarī, *Ghāya* I, p. 395.

<sup>92</sup> I.e. Miqdām b. Dāwūd al-Ruʿaynī; died 283/896; *Mizān* IV, p. 175, no.

8745. The *isnād* appears to be flawed.

<sup>93</sup> GAS I, p. 494.

<sup>94</sup> GAS I, p. 466.

spelling used by the people today?' He replied: 'That isn't my view. Rather it should be written the way the original was written.'"

Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī says: 'No religious scholar of the Muslim community opposes him in this matter.'<sup>95</sup>

And he says somewhere else: 'Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Malik b. al-Ḥasan related to us from ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz b. ʿAlī—from al-Miqdām b. Talīd—from ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbd al-Ḥakam: "Mālik was asked about the letters in the Qurʾān that are like the *wāw* and *alif*: 'In your view can they be changed in a copy of the Qurʾān if they're found to be like that in it?' He replied: 'No, they cannot!'"'<sup>96</sup>

Abū ʿAmr al-Dānī says: 'What's meant are the *wāw* and the *alif* added in the *rasm*, such as the *wāw* in *uwl<sup>ʾ</sup>k*, *ʾwly*, *ʾwl<sup>ʾ</sup>t*, and similar cases, and such as the *alif* in *lan nad<sup>ʿ</sup>w<sup>ʾ</sup>*, *qatalw<sup>ʾ</sup>*, *wa-lā awḍa<sup>ʿ</sup>w<sup>ʾ</sup>*, *lā adhbāḥnahū*, *mi<sup>ʾ</sup>a*, *mi<sup>ʾ</sup>atayn*, *lā tay<sup>ʾ</sup>sū<sup>ʾ</sup>*, *yabda<sup>ʾ</sup>ū<sup>ʾ</sup>*, *tafatta<sup>ʾ</sup>ū<sup>ʾ</sup>*, *ya<sup>ʿ</sup>b<sup>ʾ</sup>ū<sup>ʾ</sup>*, and similar cases. And the *yā<sup>ʾ</sup>* is like this in *man naba<sup>ʾ</sup>y al-mursalin*, *malā<sup>ʾ</sup>hī* and similar cases.'<sup>97</sup>

(195) Al-Jaʿbarī<sup>98</sup> says in the *Sharḥ al-ʿAqīla*: 'What Abū ʿAmr [al-Dānī] transmits from Mālik is the doctrine of the four Imams. He only singled out Mālik because Mālik issued a *fatwā* on the subject. The evidence the Imams based their views on is the same as the [first] four caliphs based themselves on—God be pleased with them!'

Much could be said on this subject. Were we to pursue the matter, one notebook, indeed two notebooks wouldn't suffice, and this would divert us from our sole purpose which is to collect the words of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

Now this is the explanation of how the twenty-nine [letters], their degrees of lengthening, and the nature of the *rasm*, are related to the forty-nine parts, as well as the explanation of what each letter possesses from these parts.

.....

As for what the relationship of the three vowels *u*, *a*, *i*, and the absence of a vowel, is to the letters—know that pronouncing *u* and absence of a vowel belong to contraction, pronouncing *a* belongs to

<sup>95</sup> *Muqniʿ*, p. 10, l. -3 to p. 11, l. 3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* p. 30, ll. 1-4.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* Our transliteration is only partially vocalized. The point here is that these words present inconsistencies in the way the *wāw*, *alif* and *yā<sup>ʾ</sup>* are written.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. fn. 86 above.



apostleship, and pronouncing *i* belongs to Adamhood. The letter (*harf*) of contraction, if pronounced with *u* or without a vowel, contains two contractions. And if the letter doesn't belong to contraction, it's attributed to it, and its pronunciation with *u* or its lack of a vowel bring it into relation with contraction. For example, *thā'*, *shīn* and *hā'* are among the letters belonging to contraction, and their being pronounced with *u* or without a vowel also belongs to contraction. *Bā'* and *tā'*, for example, are letters that don't belong to contraction but if they're pronounced with *u* or without a vowel, they belong to contraction. And it's the same with the letters of apostleship. If they're pronounced with *a*, then they contain two parts of apostleship, one part for the letter and one part for the *a* vowel. And the same holds true for the letters of Adamhood. If they're pronounced with *i*, they contain two parts of Adamhood, one part for the letter and one part for the *i* vowel.

As for the letters of prophethood, the letters of expansion, the letters of the spirit and the letters of science, their vowels have no connection with them. When pronounced with *u*, they belong to contraction, when pronounced with *a*, they belong to apostleship, when pronounced with *i*, they belong to Adamhood, and when they're without a vowel, they belong to contraction. Thus it's clear that contraction, apostleship and Adamhood include the other four parts.

The pronunciation of *u*, which belongs to contraction, is divided into seven divisions in accordance with contraction's seven parts. The pronunciation of *u* found in *hudan*, *li'l-muttaqīn*, *yu'minūna*, *al-ḥamdu li'llāhi*, *na'budu*, and *nasta'īnu*, all belong to the sense organ diffused throughout the body that feels pain (196) due to evil and pleasure due to good. The pronunciation of *u* in *kafarū* and in *al-kāfirūna hum al-zālimūna* belongs to aversion to the opposite. The pronunciation of *u* in *unzila* and suchlike belongs to obedience. The pronunciation of *u* in *ulā'ika*, wherever it occurs, belongs to inclination for one's own kind. The pronunciation of *u* in *kharajū*, *akhrijūhum* and *tundhiruhum*, all belong to the power of concentration. The pronunciation of *u* in *innahū la-'alā khuluqin 'aẓīm* (68/4) and suchlike belongs to what truly and without a doubt constitutes justice. And the pronunciation of *u* in *qāla'llāhu* and suchlike belongs to lack of shame in speaking the truth.

As for the pronunciation without a vowel, it's also divided into seven divisions. The pronunciation without a vowel in *al-ḥamdu* belongs to the diffused sense organ, the one in *al-ʿālamīn* belongs to justice, the one in *al-raḥmān* belongs to obeying the command, the one in *naʿbudu* belongs to concentration, the one in *ihdīnā* belongs to aversion to the opposite, the one in *ghayr* belongs to lack of shame in speaking the truth, and the pronunciation without a vowel which is in words like *rabbihim* belongs to inclination for one's own kind.

As for the pronunciation of *a*, it also divides into seven divisions, in accordance with the parts of apostleship. The pronunciation of *a* which is above the *hamza* in *al-ḥamdu* belongs to vision (*mushāhada*). The pronunciation of *a* which is above the *ḥāʾ* belongs to tranquillity. The pronunciation of *a* which is above the *nūn* in *al-ʿālamīna* belongs to 'living like the dwellers in Paradise'. The pronunciation of *a* above the *mīm* in *maliki yawmi'l-dīn* and above *yāʾ* in *yawmi'l-dīn* belongs to truthfulness toward everyone. The pronunciation of *a* which is above the *kāf* in *īyyāka* and above the *ʿayn* and the *lām* in *ʿalayhim* belongs to perfect science. The pronunciation of *a* which is above the *tāʾ* in *nastaʿīn* and above the *ṭāʾ* in *al-ṣirāṭa* belongs to the spirit's repose in the body in contentment. And the pronunciation of *a* which is above the *kāf* in *ulāʾika*, *ʿabduka* and *ʿibādaka* belongs to the part we call 'he dies while still alive'.

As for the pronunciation of *i*, it's also divided into seven divisions, in accordance with the parts of Adamhood. The pronunciation of *i* in *li'llāhi* and in every *li* at the beginning or in the middle of a word belongs to perfection of internal sense perception. The pronunciation of *i* which is in the *hāʾ* in *li'llāhi* belongs to masculinity. The pronunciation of *i* which is under (197) the *bāʾ* in *rabbī* belongs to perfect reason. The pronunciation of *i* which is under the *mīm* in *al-ʿālamīna* belongs to perfection of the external senses. The pronunciation of *i* which is under the *nūn* in *al-raḥmāni* belongs to perfection of internal form. And the pronunciation of *i* which is under the *nūn* in *al-dīni* belongs to removal of Satan's allotment.

If you've understood this and know that all the letters and vowels and the degrees of lengthening are completely contained in the parts of the seven internal lights, then you know the sense of the *ḥadīth* and have understood the meaning of the Prophet's words—God's

blessings and peace be upon him: 'This Qur'ān has been sent down upon seven letters.'

It's now perfectly clear to you without a doubt that the differences in pronunciation of the authorities among the scholars of Qur'ānic recitation don't fall outside the noble meaning and the subtle secret intended by the eminent *ḥadīth*. Let's now illustrate this through the example of the surah known as 'the Mother of the Qur'ān' (*al-Fātiḥa*), so that it's clear to see with your own eyes.

.....

Thus we say that in God the Sublime's words: *al-ḥamdu li'llāhi*:

One part of Adamhood is contained in the *mīm* because *mīm* belongs to masculinity which is one of the parts of Adamhood. Another part is contained in the pronunciation of *i* which is under the *hā'*, and the *i* also belongs to masculinity. And another part is contained in the *i* which is under the *lām* and it belongs to perfection of internal perception. Thus the words contain three parts of Adamhood. And there's also a part of prophethood contained in them in the *hā'*, and *hā'* belongs to mercy which is one of the parts of prophethood. A part of the spirit is in the *dāl*, for *dāl* belongs to purity which is one of the parts of the spirit.

In these words are also five parts of contraction among the letters, vowels and pronunciation without a vowel. The *hamza* belongs to obedience which is one of the parts of contraction. The pronunciation without a vowel which is above the *lām* belongs to the diffused sense organ and this is one of the parts of contraction. The pronunciation without a vowel above the *mīm* also belongs to the diffused sense organ. And the *hā'* belongs to aversion to the opposite which is one of the parts of contraction.

In these words are also six parts of apostleship. The *a* of the *hamza* belongs to vision (*mushāhada*), and the *lām* belongs to perfect science. The *a* of the *hā'* belongs to tranquillity, and the *lām* with *i* belongs to perfect science. The doubled *lām* also belongs to perfect science, (198) and its doubling sign (*shadda*) with *a* belongs to vision. Indeed, every doubling sign with *a* in the *Fātiḥa* belongs to vision.

Thus in *al-ḥamdu li'llāhi* it's clear there are three parts of Adamhood, one part of prophethood, one part of the spirit, five parts of contraction, and six of apostleship. Moreover, the *hamza* contains contraction due to the letter and apostleship due to the letter's vowel.

In the *lām*, however, the reverse is the case: apostleship comes from the letter and contraction from the pronunciation without a vowel. In the *ḥā'* prophethood belongs to the letter and apostleship to the letter's vowel. In the *mīm* Adamhood belongs to the letter and contraction to the letter's pronunciation without a vowel. In the *dāl* the spirit belongs to the letter and contraction to the letter's vowel. In the first *lām* apostleship belongs to the letter and Adamhood to the letter's vowel. In the second *lām*, which is doubled, apostleship belongs to the letter and apostleship to the letter's vowel. And in the *hā'* contraction belongs to the letter and Adamhood to the letter's vowel.

And in God the Sublime's words: *rabbi'l-ʿālamīna*:

There are four parts of Adamhood. The *i* under the *bā'* belongs to perfect reason which is one of the parts of Adamhood. The *alif* which is after the *ʿayn* belongs to perfection of the external senses and the *mīm* to masculinity. The *i* of the latter belongs to perfection of the external senses. All of this belongs to Adamhood. Similarly, the words contain two parts of contraction. The *hamzat al-waṣl* belongs to obedience and the *sukūn* of the *lām* on the *al-* to justice. Both of these belong to contraction. Moreover, the words contain two parts of expansion. The *rā'* belongs to readiness to pardon and the *nūn* to perfect joy, both of which belong to expansion. And they contain a part of prophethood because the *ʿayn* belongs to forgiveness which belongs to prophethood. And they contain eight parts of apostleship. The *a* of the *rā'* belongs to tranquillity, the *bā'* to tranquillity as well, the *a* of the *hamza* to vision, the *lām* to perfect science, the *a* of the *ʿayn* to tranquillity, the *lām* to perfect science, its *a* to vision, the *a* of the *nūn* to 'he lives the life of the people of Paradise'. And all these are parts of apostleship.

They also contain one part of science and this is the lengthened *yā'* after the *mīm*. It belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction which is one of the parts of science. The *rā'* contains expansion from the letter and apostleship from the vowel. The *bā'* contains apostleship from the letter and Adamhood from the vowel. The *hamza* contains contraction from the letter and apostleship from the vowel. In the *lām* with *sukūn* is apostleship from the letter and contraction from the *sukūn*. In the *ʿayn* is prophethood from (199) the letter and apostleship from the vowel. In the *alif* is Adamhood, in the *lām* apostleship from the vowel and apostleship from the letter's

vowel. In the *mīm* is Adamhood from the letter and Adamhood from the letter's vowel. And in the *yā'* is science, and in the *nūn* expansion from the letter and apostleship from the letter's vowel.

And in God the Sublime's words: *al-rahmāni'l-rahīmi*:

There are five parts of Adamhood. The *mīm* belongs to masculinity, the *i* of the *nūn* to perfection of external form. The *i* of the *hā'* belongs to perfection of external perception, the *mīm* to masculinity and its *i* to perfect reason. And they're all parts of Adamhood.

The words also contain five parts of contraction. The *hamza* belongs to obedience, the *sukūn* of the *lām* to the diffused sense organ, and the *sukūn* of the *hā'* to obedience to the word of God. The [next] *hamza* also belongs to obedience and the [next] *sukūn* of the *lām* to the diffused sense organ. And they're all parts of contraction.

The words also contain three parts of expansion. The *rā'* belongs to readiness to pardon, the *nūn* to perfect joy, and the second *rā'* to readiness to pardon. And they contain two parts of prophethood because both the first and the second *hā'* belong to perfect mercy which is one of the parts of prophethood. And they contain seven parts of apostleship. The *a* of the *hamza* belongs to vision (*mushāhada*), the *lām* to perfect science, the *a* of the doubled *rā'* to vision. The *a* of the *mīm* belongs to truthfulness toward everyone, and the *a* of the *hamza* to vision. The *lām* belongs to perfect science, and the *a* of the doubled *rā'* to vision. If you discard the two *lāms* because of their being contracted, what remains are five parts. Two parts, that of apostleship and that of contraction, are omitted.

The words also contain one part of science. This is the lengthened *yā'* which belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction. As for the *alif* which is after the *mīm*, it belongs to perfection of the external senses. It's added to the five parts of Adamhood mentioned previously. How this affects the letter and its vowel is understandable from what has preceded and there's no need to repeat it each time.

And in God the Sublime's words: *maliki yawmi'l-dīni*:

Seven parts of Adamhood are contained. The *mīm* belongs to masculinity, the *i* of the *lām* to perfection of internal perception, the *i* of the *kāf* to perfection of external form, the *mīm* to masculinity, and its *i* (200) to perfection of the external senses. The *i* of the *dāl* belongs to perfection of internal form, the *i* of *nūn* to removal of

Satan's allotment. This is the case if one reads *maliki* with a short *a*. If one reads it as a long *a* and adds an *alif* after the *mīm*, there are eight parts of Adamhood because the lengthened *alif* (with *madda*), which has the value of one *alif*, belongs to perfection of the internal senses—if the word has to do with something outside the speaker's body.

And the words contain one part of contraction, i.e. the *sukūn* on the *wāw*, which belongs to the diffused sense organ. And the contracted *lām* causes its *sukūn* to disappear.

They also contain one part of expansion, i.e. the *nūn* which belongs to perfect joy. And they contain two parts of prophethood because the *kāf* belongs to knowledge of God the Sublime and the *yā'* belongs to complete fear of God the Sublime. And both of them are parts of prophethood.

They also contain one part of the spirit, i.e. the *dāl* which belongs to purity. And they contain three parts of apostleship, i.e. the *lām* which belongs to perfect science, the *hamza* of the *al-* and its *lām* being contracted; the *a* of the *mīm* which belongs to truthfulness; and the *a* of the *yā'* which likewise belongs to truthfulness. And they contain two parts of science, because the *wāw* is from the part which we call 'he dies while still alive'. And the lengthened *yā'* belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction.

And in God the Sublime's words: *iyyāka na<sup>c</sup>budu wa-iyyāka nasta<sup>c</sup>īnu*:

There are six parts of Adamhood. The *i* of the *hamza* belongs to perfect reason, the lengthened *alif* to perfection of the external senses, and the [next] *i* of the *hamza* in *iyyāka* and the lengthened *alif* are as just mentioned. The *tā'* belongs to perfection of the external senses, and the *i* of the *‘ayn* to the perfection of internal perception.

And the words contain six parts of contraction, i.e. the *hamza* at the beginning belongs to obedience, the *sukūn* on the *‘ayn* to the perfect power of concentration, the *u* of the *bā'* to the diffused sense organ, the *u* of the *dāl* is the same as the *u* of the *bā'*, the *sukūn* of the *sīn* belongs to obedience, and the *u* of the *nūn* to the diffused sense organ.

And the words contain four parts of expansion, i.e. the three *nūns* which belong to perfect joy, and the *sīn* which belongs to lowering the wing of humility.

And the words contain six parts of prophethood. The *yā'* belongs to complete fear, the *kāf* to knowledge (201) of God the Sublime, the *‘ayn* to forgiveness. Similarly, the *yā'*, the *kāf* and the *‘ayn* in *īyyāka nasta‘īnu* are as in the previous description.

And the words contain one of the parts of the spirit, i.e. the *dāl* which belongs to purity.

And they contain ten parts of apostleship. The *a* of the *yā'* belongs to truthfulness with everyone, the *a* of the *kāf* to perfect science, the *a* of the *nūn* to 'he lives the life of the people of Paradise', the *yā'* to tranquillity, the *wāw* to 'he dies while still alive', and its *a* to vision, the *a* of the *yā'*, the *a* of the *kāf* and the *a* of the *nūn* are as just described. The *a* of the [next] *yā'* belongs to the spirit's repose in the body in contentment.

And they contain one part of science, i.e. the long *yā'* which here belongs to knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of the two worlds.

And in God the Sublime's words: *ihdinā'l-ṣirāṭa'l-mustaqīma*:

There are nine parts of Adamhood. The *i* of the *hamza* belongs to perfect reason, the *i* of the *dāl* to perfection of internal form, the *ṣād* to perfect reason, and its *i* to perfection of internal perception, and the long *alif* also belongs to perfection of internal perception, the *mīm* to masculinity, the *tā'* to perfection of the external senses, and the *i* of the *qāf* also belongs to perfection of the external senses, and the *mīm* to masculinity.

And the words contain eight parts of contraction. The *hamza* belongs to obedience, the *hā'* to aversion to the opposite, and its *sukūn* also belongs to aversion, the *hamzat al-waṣl* in *al-ṣirāṭa* as well as in *al-mustaqīma* belongs to obedience, the *sukūn* of the *lām* to the diffused sense organ, and the *u* of the *mīm* also belongs to the diffused sense organ, and the *sukūn* of the *sīn* to justice.

And they contain three parts of expansion. The *nūn* belongs to perfect joy, the *rā'* to readiness to pardon, the *sīn* to lowering the wing of humility, if one reads *al-ṣirāṭa* with *ṣād*, but if one reads it with *sīn* as Qunbul<sup>99</sup> and those who agree with him, it contains four parts of expansion because the *sīn* of *al-sirāṭa* becomes added to the other three to make four. They contain no part of prophethood at all.

<sup>99</sup> *A'ḷām* VI, p. 190; died 291/904.

(202) And the words contain three parts of the spirit. The *dāl* belongs to purity, the *ṭāʾ* to discernment, and the *qāf* to perfect deeper vision (*baṣīra*).

And they contain eight of the parts of apostleship. The *a* of *nūn* belongs to 'he lives the life of the people of Paradise', the *a* of the *hamza* in *al-ṣirāṭa* belongs to vision, the *a* of *rāʾ* to tranquillity, the *a* of *ṭāʾ* to the spirit's repose in the body in contentment, and the *a* of the *hamza* in *al-mustaqīma* also belongs to tranquillity.

And they contain one part of science, namely the long *yāʾ* which here belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction.

And in God the Sublime's words: *ṣirāṭa'lladhīna an'amta 'alayhim*:

There are eight parts of Adamhood. The *ṣād* belongs to perfect reason and its *i* belongs to perfection of internal perception, the long *alif* to perfection of external perception, the *i* of the *dhāl* to perfection of internal perception, the *mīm* to masculinity, the *tāʾ* to perfection of the external senses, the *i* of the *hāʾ* also belongs to perfection of the external senses, and the *mīm* to masculinity.

And the words contain seven parts of contraction. The *hamza* of *an'amta* belongs to obedience, the *sukūn* of the *nūn* to the diffused sense organ, the *sukūn* of the *mīm* to justice, and the *sukūn* of the *yāʾ* also belongs to justice. The *hāʾ* belongs to aversion to the opposite, and its *u*, if one adopts this reading as Ḥamza<sup>100</sup> and those who agree with him, belongs to inclination for one's own kind, as does the *sukūn* of the *mīm*. And the same is true of its *u*, if one adopts this reading as Ibn Kathīr<sup>101</sup> and those who agree with him (i.e. *'alayhumu*).

And they contain four parts of expansion, i.e. the *sīn* in *ṣirāṭ*, if one follows the reading of Qunbul and those who agree with him. As for the reading *ṣād* with a trace of *zāʾ*, which is the one adopted by Ḥamza in *ṣirāṭ* and by Khalaf<sup>102</sup> in *ṣirāṭ*, *ṣirāṭī* and *ṣirāṭuka*, this letter contains one part of Adamhood (203) because it contains one part of *ṣād* which belongs to the letters of Adamhood, and one part of apostleship since it contains one part of *zāʾ* which belongs to the letters of apostleship. The result is that this letter, pronounced with a trace of *zāʾ*, contains something from Adamhood as well as

<sup>100</sup> See fn. 30 above.

<sup>101</sup> See fn. 26 above.

<sup>102</sup> GAS I, p. 12; died 229/844.



something from apostleship. The second part of expansion is the *rāʾ* which belongs to readiness to pardon. And the third part is the first *nūn* and the fourth part the second *nūn*, and the *nūn* belongs to perfect joy.

And the words contain three parts of prophethood. The first and the second *ʿayn* belong to forgiveness, and the *yāʾ* with *sukūn* belongs to complete fear of God—He is mighty and glorious!

And they contain twelve parts of apostleship. The *a* of the *rāʾ* belongs to tranquillity, the *a* of the *ṭāʾ* to the spirit's repose in the body in contentment, the *a* of the *hamzat al-waṣl* to vision, the *lām* to perfect science, and its *a* to vision, and the *a* of the *nūn* to 'he lives the life of the people Paradise', the *a* of the *hamza* to vision, the *a* of the *ʿayn* to tranquillity, and the *a* of the *tāʾ* belongs to perfect science, as does the *a* of the *ʿayn* and the *a* of the *lām* in *ʿalayhim*, and similarly the letter *lām* also belongs to perfect science.

And they contain two parts from the parts of science, i.e. the *dāl* which belongs to knowledge of the languages, and the long *yāʾ* which belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction.

And they contain one part from the parts of the spirit, i.e. the *ṭāʾ*, which belongs to discernment. But God knows best!

And in God the Sublime's words: *ghayri'l-maghḍūbi ʿalayhim wa-lā'l-dāllīn*:

The *ghayn* belongs to perfection of external form which is included in Adamhood. The *a* it bears belongs to tranquillity which is included in the parts of apostleship. The *yāʾ* with *sukūn* belongs to complete fear of God—He is mighty and glorious—which is included in the parts of prophethood. Its *sukūn* belongs to lack of shame in speaking the truth which is included in the parts of contraction. The *rāʾ* belongs to readiness to pardon which is included in the parts of expansion. Its *i* belongs to perfection of internal form which is included in the parts of Adamhood. The *hamzat al-waṣl* belongs to obedience which is one of the parts of contraction. Its *a* belongs to vision which is one of the parts of apostleship. (204) The *lām* with *sukūn* belongs to perfect science which is one of the parts of apostleship. Its *sukūn* belongs to the diffused sense organ which is one of the parts of contraction. The *mīm* belongs to masculinity which is one of the parts of Adamhood, and its *a* belongs to tranquillity which is included in the parts of apostleship. The (second) *ghayn* belongs to perfection of external

form which is one of the parts of Adamhood, and its *sukūn* belongs to the perfect power of concentration which is included in the parts of contraction. The *ḍād* belongs to speaking the truth which is one of the parts of prophethood, and its *u* belongs to the diffused sense organ which is included in the parts of contraction. The long *wāw* belongs to lack of shame in speaking the truth, which is also included in the parts of contraction. The *bā'* belongs to tranquillity which is one of the parts of apostleship, and its *i* belongs to perfect reason which is one of the parts of Adamhood. The *‘ayn* belongs to forgiveness which is included in the parts of prophethood, and its *a* belongs to perfect science which is included in the parts of apostleship. The *lām* belongs to perfect science which is one of the parts of apostleship, and its *a* also belongs to perfect science which is one of the parts of apostleship. The *yā'* belongs to complete fear of God—He is mighty and glorious—which is included in the parts of prophethood, and its *sukūn* belongs to justice which is included in the parts of contraction. The *hā'* belongs to aversion which is one of the parts of contraction, and its *i* belongs to perfection of external perception which is one of the parts of Adamhood.

If one reads *‘alayhum* [instead of *‘alayhim*], the *u* belongs to aversion to the opposite which is the reverse of the *u* in *‘alayhum* in *an‘amta ‘alayhum*, which belongs to inclination for one’s own kind because the one who receives favor (*al-mun‘am ‘alayhi*) encounters inclination, whereas the one who is the object of anger (*al-maghḍūb ‘alayhi*) encounters aversion. The *mīm* belongs to masculinity which is one of the parts of Adamhood. Its *u*, if one follows the reading of Ibn Kathīr and those who agree with him, belongs to aversion to the opposite which is included in the parts of contraction, and its *sukūn*, if one follows the reading of others, is in order to confirm the aversion resulting from the *u* which Ibn Kathīr reads, for it’s the original, whereas the *sukūn* is adventitious. The *wāw* belongs to ‘he dies while still alive’ which is one of the parts of apostleship, and its *a* belongs to vision (*mushāhada*) which is also included in the parts of apostleship. The *lām-alif* belongs to perfect science which is one of the parts of apostleship, and its *a* also belongs to perfect science which is one of the parts of apostleship. The *alif al-waṣl* belongs to obedience which is included in the parts of contraction, and its *a* belongs to vision which is one of the parts of apostleship. The doubled *ḍād* belongs to speaking the truth which is one of the parts

of prophethood, and its *a* belongs to vision which is one of the parts of apostleship.

As for the *alif*, in this case it's outside the body of the person speaking and thus (205) the six degrees of lengthening come into play. If the length we give it has the value of one *alif*, it belongs to perfection of internal form. If the length we give it has the value of two *alifs*, it belongs to perfection of internal form together with the spirit's repose in the body in contentment. If the length we give it has the value of three *alifs*, it belongs to perfection of internal form and repose of the spirit together with the diffused faculty. If the length we give it has the value of four *alifs*, it belongs to perfection of internal form, repose of the spirit, and the diffused faculty together with perfection of internal perception. If the length we give it has the value of five *alifs*, it belongs to perfection of internal form, repose of the spirit, the diffused faculty, and perfection of internal perception together with loathing the false. And if the length we give it has the value of six *alifs*, it belongs to perfection of internal form, repose of the spirit, the diffused faculty, perfection of internal perception, and loathing the false together with settling of the good in the body.

Now you have learned that perfection of internal form is contained in Adamhood, repose of the spirit is contained in apostleship, the diffused faculty in contraction, perfection of internal perception in Adamhood, loathing the false in prophethood, and the good's settling into the body in expansion. Vowel lengthening (*madd*) with the value of one *alif* contains Adamhood only; with the value of two *alifs*: Adamhood and apostleship; with the value of three: Adamhood, apostleship and contraction; with the value of four: Adamhood, apostleship, contraction and Adamhood; with the value of five: Adamhood, apostleship, contraction, Adamhood, and prophethood; with the value of six: Adamhood, apostleship, contraction, Adamhood, prophethood, and expansion.

As for the doubled *lām* with *i* (in *ḍāllīn*), the *lām* belongs to perfect science which is one of the parts of apostleship, and its *i* belongs to perfection of internal perception which is one of the parts of Adamhood.

As for the long *yāʾ* (in *ḍāllīn*), if we halt at the *nūn*, provide it with *sukūn* and pronounce it with [one of] the six degrees [of lengthening]: if we lengthen it by the value of one *yāʾ*, it belongs to

limiting the directions to the forward direction. If we lengthen it by the value of two *yā*'s, it belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction, as well as knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn. If we lengthen it by the value of three *yā*'s, it belongs to limiting the directions to the forward direction, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, as well as 'living a life like the people of Paradise'. If we lengthen it by the value of four *yā*'s, it belongs to limiting, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, living a life like the people of Paradise, as well as knowledge of the final outcome. If we lengthen it by the value of five *yā*'s, it belongs to limiting, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, living a life like (206) the people of Paradise, knowledge of the final outcome, as well as lack of squandering. And if we lengthen it by the value of six *yā*'s, it belongs to limiting, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, living a life like the people of Paradise, knowledge of the final outcome, lack of squandering, as well as knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of the two worlds.

Moreover, you've learned that limiting, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, knowledge of the final outcome, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the two worlds, lack of squandering—all these things are included in the parts of science, and that of these six only 'living a life like the people of Paradise' is one of the parts of apostleship. And vowel lengthening with the value of one *yā*' contains one part of science, lengthening with the value of two *yā*'s two parts of science, with the value of three *yā*'s two parts of science and one part of apostleship, with the value of four *yā*'s three parts of science and one of apostleship, with the value of five *yā*'s four parts of science and one of apostleship, and with the value of six *yā*'s five parts of science and one of apostleship. As for the *nūn* with *a* (in *ḍāllīna*), it belongs to perfect joy which is one of the parts of expansion. And its *a* belongs to 'living a life like the people of Paradise', which is one of the parts of apostleship. This is the end of what concerns the *Fātiḥa* according to the readings handed down with multiple chains of transmission.

And you've learned that of 'the seven letters' found in the words of the *Fātiḥa* three occur most frequently: Adamhood, contraction, and apostleship. The secret behind this is that they occur in letters (consonants) and vowels. Every *u* and *sukūn* belong to contraction, every *a* to apostleship, and every *i* to Adamhood. Every word in which *a* frequently occurs contains much light of apostleship, and every word in which *i* frequently occurs contains much light of Adamhood. And every word in which *u* or pronunciation without a vowel frequently occurs contains much contraction.

.....

As for what concerns the *Fātiḥa* according to readings other than the [canonical] seven, know that in this regard there's great diversity apart from the seven.

An example is the reading of Zayd,<sup>103</sup> transmitted from Ru<sup>o</sup>ba b. al-<sup>c</sup>Ajjāj<sup>104</sup> and al-<sup>c</sup>Atakī:<sup>105</sup> *al-ḥamda li'llāh*, in which the *dāl* bears an *a*. And the explanation on the external level is that the *a* is based on absolute passivity after removal (207) of the verb. In the original it was: *aḥmadu'llāha ḥamdan* (I offer up praise to God). Then it was changed to its particular phrasing. The explanation for the reading *al-ḥamdu*, i.e. with *u*, is that it occurs at the beginning. As for the explanation on the internal level, it's in accordance with the secret of the vowels *u* and *a*. If one adopts the reading *u*, praise of God is pronounced while the body takes on its qualities so that praise flows through the whole of the body. This assumption of its qualities is because of the *u* above the *dāl* which belongs to the sense organ diffused throughout the body. It's as if the body of the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—once he'd pronounced the praise of God, perceived the meaning of the *u* and took on the qualities of the praise in the manner of someone who both speaks and acts. This is in contrast to the pronunciation with *a* (*al-ḥamda*). The *u* above the *dāl* indicates perfect knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—and that He deserves praise absolutely, whether the body takes on its qualities or not. The verse is silent about this, and that's why the reading with *u* is more sound, better known and more frequent.

<sup>103</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 206; this is Zayd b. <sup>c</sup>Alī, the fifth Imam of the Zaydites; cf. EI s.n.

<sup>104</sup> GAS II, pp. 367 f.; died 145/762.

<sup>105</sup> Probably Shu<sup>c</sup>ba b. al-Ḥajjāj; GAS I, p. 92; died 160/776.

You may say: 'The *sukūn* on the *lām* and the *mīm* belong to the diffused sense organ, and this informs of the above-mentioned assumption of qualities. Thus the reading with *u* or with *a* is the same.'

I would answer: The diffused sense organ indicates the adjustment, as you said, but if it occurs before the end of the word like the *sukūn* on the *lām* and *mīm*, the assumption of the qualities depends on the peculiarity of the word. That is to say, the body takes on the qualities of the word in question and finds its letters pleasurable. And if it comes after the end of the word like the *u* of the *dāl*, it depends on the meaning. This is excluded, however, if one adopts the reading *a* but present if one adopts the reading *u*. Therefore the *u* is more appropriate and more frequent.

Then there's al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī's reading: *al-ḥamda lallāh*, with *a* above the *dāl* and *a* above the *lām*. The external reason for this is that the pronunciation of the *lām* is coordinated with or subordinate to the *dāl*. On the internal level, it's based on the difference between the secret of *a* and *i*. Here the *i* belongs to perfect internal perception which derives from perfect emotion. Reading *i*, i.e. *lām* with *i*, indicates that emotion has perceived the ascription of praise to God and taken on the qualities of its meaning. By contrast, reading *a* belongs to perfect science, i.e. one knows about the said ascription with perfect knowledge (science). But perceiving something with the senses is stronger than knowledge of it. For this reason the reading *li'llāhi* is more sound, better known and more frequent.

(208) Another reading which comes from al-Kisāʿī<sup>106</sup> via Qutayba<sup>107</sup> is that of *imāla* (the pronunciation of *a* shaded toward *e*). In *imāla* there's a part of *i*, and every *i* with *lām* in the middle or at the beginning of a word belongs to perfect internal perception. In *imāla* there's acknowledgement that one has perceived the meaning. And this contains open glorification and communication of the meaning.

Also from al-Kisāʿī via Qutayba is the reading: *al-ʿālamīn* with *imāla*, *al-raḥmān* with *imāla*, and *māliki yawmi'l-dīn* with *imāla*. But whenever this perception occurs before the end of the word and the emergence of the meaning, it's due to the (individual)

<sup>106</sup> See fn. 31 above.

<sup>107</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 208; al-Jazarī, *Ghāya* II, p. 26; died shortly after 200/815.

pronunciation. That's why *imāla* isn't more appropriate than the reading with *a*, because the perception based on the pronunciation resulting from *imāla* emerged from the Prophet [only] occasionally—God's blessings and peace be upon him! That was when he was agitated and recited for himself and he'd bring forth the internal meanings and make them apparent in his recitation. As for when he wished to communicate his words to the Muslim community and instruct them, for the most part he wouldn't burden the words with what preoccupied his noble interior—God's blessings and peace be upon him! That's why the reading with *a* is more frequent and better known, for it followed prevailing practice.

Another reading is *u* in: *rabbu'l-ʿālamīn, wa'l-rahmānu wa'l-rahīmu*. Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī<sup>108</sup> adopted this reading, as well as a reading with *a*. The explanation for these readings on the external level is that the *i* indicates coordination. The *u* and the *a* indicate a subject or the accusative. On the internal level, it accords with the difference between the secrets of the three vowels. The *i* belongs to perfect reason which is included in Adamhood, and Adamhood consists entirely of humility and good behavior. Here perfect reason has made known the speaker's humility toward his Lord and his seeing himself as acted upon (*maḥḥūl*) and mastered (*marbūb*), which is one of the secrets of *i*. If one adopts the reading with *a*, it belongs to perfect science which requires knowledge of things as they really are. This is to know (209) that the Lord is a lord (*rabb*) and human beings are dominated by the Master (*marbūb*). Whether his body has humbled itself and has behaved properly before God the Sublime is another matter.

Reading *u* belongs to the diffused sense organ, but [only] when it occurs before the meaning is completed, because the meaning of the governed noun in a genitive construction isn't completed until its second part is pronounced. And here the perception acknowledges that the body has taken on the qualities of the word *rabb* and been adorned by it. But the reading with *i* is preferable with regard to the meaning. That's why it's more frequent, better known and more sound.

Furthermore, the Qurʾān reciters (*al-qurrāʾ*) have adopted various readings for: *maliki yawmi'l-dīn*. The multitude reads *a* [in *maliki*]

<sup>108</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 208; al-Jazarī, *Ghāya* I, p. 305, no. 1339; died 215/830.

without an *alif*, whereas al-Kisāʿī and ʿĀṣim<sup>109</sup> and those who agree with them read an *alif* after the *mīm*. The explanation for this on the external level is that the reading with short *a* signifies an anthropomorphic attribute as in: *malik al-nās* (king over the people), whereas the reading with a long *a* signifies an active participle as in: *mālik al-mulk* (the one possessing rule). On the internal level, this is based on the secret of the long *alif* that's added in the lengthened reading. It belongs to perfection of internal form and contains the secret of indicating an action carried out by the person being spoken about. The *alif* in question indicates that God the Sublime is endowed with the attribute of *mulk* and that this is one of His activities. And it instructs the people who are present and hear the word to pay attention to this wondrous matter. The sound of the *alif* comes forth from perfection of internal form. This sound is meant to communicate two things. The first is concerned with the one being spoken about, in particular the activities that are ascribed to him. The second is concerned with those who are listening, i.e. that they pay attention and wake up from the sleep of negligence.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'This meaning isn't contained in the reading with short *a*. But there's another secret behind the reading with short *a*, namely it contains an indication of the secret of relation [in a genitive construction]—here the relation of *malik* to *yawmi'l-dīn*. This meaning in the reading with long *a* is scarcely expressed.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this accords perfectly with the rules of grammar. The *ism al-fāʿil* is used for events and what crops up anew. This is the secret of the above-mentioned *alif* and its addition with regard to the intention of separation.<sup>110</sup> And this is the sense of his words—God be pleased with him: 'This meaning in the reading with long *a* is scarcely expressed.' What an excellent authority al-Dabbāgh is!

(210) Al-Yamānī<sup>111</sup> adopted the reading: *malik yawm al-dīn*, adding the *yāʾ* after the *lām*.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'In this case *yāʾ* belongs to knowledge of the final outcome, because if the structure

<sup>109</sup> See fn. 29 above.

<sup>110</sup> Sense unclear.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 210; his name is Muḥammad b. al-Samayfi<sup>c</sup>; *Ghāya* II, p. 161, no. 3106.



of *yā'* isn't impaired by its disappearing, it belongs to knowledge of the final outcome. Otherwise, it's as in the previous detailed explanation. In this added *yā'* is contained the secret of indicating the carnal soul (*nafs*) of the speaker, for since he knows the final outcome, he admonishes his carnal soul and wakes it up. But the *yā'* is weak because rousing the carnal soul, which is what the *yā'* indicates, allows that the meaning of the word may be neglected. In this case, however, it isn't neglected since everyone pays attention to it. Hence the reading that omits the *yā'* is more appropriate.'

°Alī—God be pleased with him—adopted the reading: *mallāki yawm al-dīn* in the intensified form.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'The meaning of this reading is more special than the previous one. The reading requires that on the Final Day God the Sublime is king over the people obliged to follow the precepts of religion but not over the other creatures. The reason it requires this is that the *i* beneath the *kāf* belongs to perfection of external form. And that's the form of Adam's offspring (mankind), which has raised its head beneath the *kāf*. The sound resulting from the long *alif* calls attention to the form. The attention given to doubling the *lām* confers on it greater emphasis and greater affirmation of its meaning. This requires excluding all else, in contrast to the widespread reading. In short, this concern requires that the door be closed to everything except Adam's offspring. Everything else has no place in this reading and for this reason it's weak.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is required by the intensification of *mulk* which results from the pattern *fa'cāl*. *Al-malik* is someone who freely exercises power, and exercising power over Adam's offspring by meting out reward and punishment occurs more often than exercising power over anything else. Indeed, Adam's offspring are the ones who are meant. Everything else follows them. The reading *mallāk* has in mind this more intense meaning. That's why the reading handed down by unbroken tradition is widespread. For it's more comprehensive, admitting as it does, Adam's offspring as well as everything else.

(211) Then there's the reading of Abū Ḥaywā:<sup>112</sup> *mālīka yawm al-dīn*, where *kāf* with *a* is taken as the vocative or the object of an

<sup>112</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 211; al-Jazarī, *Ghāya* I, p. 325, no. 1419; died 203/818.

understood verb. As for the internal level, the *a* of the *kāf* belongs to perfect science. Whoever reads *kāf* with *a* doesn't allow his carnal soul or that of anyone else to enter the state of being possessed (*mamlūkiyya*). This is in contrast to *kāf* with *i*. The *i* belongs to Adamhood, and Adamhood contains proper behavior on the part of the speaker and humility. Adamhood's proper behavior arises from its seven parts. Here the part of Adamhood in question is perfection of external form which is indicated by *i*. Consequently, the proper behavior in *i* arose from God the Sublime's beneficence and His masterly perfection of the form of Adam's offspring. This is the meaning of acknowledging God the Sublime's sovereignty over the body of the speaker and of others, in contrast to the reading with *a*. Hence this reading isn't widely known.

And there's the reading of °Umar b. °Abd al-°Azīz:<sup>113</sup> *malkī yawm al-dīn*, with *sukūn* on the *lām*. On the external level, the reason for this is that we eliminated the *i* by putting a *sukūn* on the *lām* the way they eliminate the *i* with a *sukūn* in *katf* in order to lighten it. The reason on the internal level is that the word emerged as a report on the tongue of God—He is mighty and glorious—and on His behalf, entailing disturbance in the speaker's body and a lack of power to bear it. The indication of this is what we've said, i.e. the *sukūn* on the *lām*, since it was the cause of the change in the reading. And the reason why it indicates this is that if one of the letters of apostleship such as *lām*, which belongs to perfect science, is pronounced with *sukūn*, it indicates that the previous vowel also belongs to perfect science. And if when it had no *sukūn* it belonged to something other than perfect science, once it's pronounced with *sukūn* it necessarily belongs to (212) perfect science as in the present case. The vowel of *mīm* with vocalization of the *lām* belongs to truthfulness. With *sukūn* it then belongs to perfect science, because the *sukūn* confirms the meaning of the letter that strengthens what precedes it. And this *sukūn* dispossesses the previous vowel of its meaning and dispossesses its letter of its vowel which belongs to perfect science if *lām* is pronounced with *a*, or to perfection of internal perception if it is pronounced with *i*. As soon as the word is changed and this shudder comes over it, an earthquake and confusion come over the body of the speaker. This occurs because the body expresses a

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113 Cf. EI s.n.

relation to kingship for itself which it can't support, for only the eternal Essence (*al-dhāt al-qadīma*) can support it. Therefore it returns to the proper behavior of being God's bondsman which is indicated by the *i* pronunciation of Adamhood under the *kāf*. And the *sukūn* of the *lām* belongs to the diffused sense organ. But because it causes a shudder in the word, it foreshadows the occurrence of the same in the body. This only happens, however, when the body is like a young boy who wants to carry what he can't support. But God knows best!

And still another reading remains: *malaka yawma'l-dīn* where *malaka* is a verb in the past and *yawma'l-dīn* is its object. °Alī b. Abī Ṭālib adopted this reading—God be pleased with him! And another is: *mālikun yawma'l-dīn*, i.e. the *kāf* with *u* and nunation, and *yawm* with *a* which was the reading of °Āṣim al-Jahḍarī.<sup>114</sup> And then: *māliku yawmi'l-dīn*, i.e. the *kāf* with *u* but no nunation and with *i* in a genitive construction. The secrets involved in this can be understood through the secrets of the vowels. There's nothing in these less well-known readings which does justice to the meaning contained in the two readings handed down with multiple chains of transmission.

And one of the disagreements concerning the *Fātiḥa* is about: *iyyāka*. The multitude adopts the reading of *hamza* with *i*. Sufyān al-Thawrī,<sup>115</sup> however, read the *hamza* with *a*. The reason for this, on the external level, is that these are two separate words. The reason on the internal level is that the secret of the *i* is different from the secret of the *a*. The secret of the *i* (213) contains proper behavior and contrition before God the Sublime, and self-abasement and humility are required in this matter. Such is the relation of the speaker to God the Sublime. Indeed, the *i* conveys this meaning because it belongs to perfect reason, and perfect reason calls for humility and self-abasement. After all, perfect reason knows what the rank of the bondsman (*°abd*) should be and what the rank of the master (*rabb*) should be. As for the secret of the *a*, the *a* has arisen from perfect vision which belongs to the parts of apostleship. And the *a* makes known arrival (*wuṣūl*) and union (*jam°*), and contained in these is humiliation. On the other hand, in the *i* is a kind of self-abasement which is appropriate for the common people. Hence the reading with *i* is more widely known and more frequent.

<sup>114</sup> See fn. 29 above.

<sup>115</sup> See p. 146, fn. 99.

Al-Uswārī<sup>116</sup> adopted the reading: *iyāka*, i.e. the *hamza* with *i* and removal of the *tashdīd* from the *yā'*. There's no difference between this reading and that adopted by the multitude, except that the reading of the multitude emphasizes fear of God the Sublime and truthfulness in this fear. The latter requires strong attachment to God the Sublime and intense longing for Him—He is mighty and glorious! This is in contrast to the reading without *tashdīd*, for even though it contains fear and truthfulness because the *yā'* belongs to fear of God the Sublime, and its *a* to truthfulness—as described above—none the less the reading with *tashdīd* emphasizes the point.

And there's further disagreement. Some people of Mecca adopt the reading: *na'bud*, i.e. with *sukūn* on the *dāl*. The reason for this is the effect of lightening, as in Abū 'Amr's use of *sukūn* in *ya'murkum*.

The reason on the internal level is the secret of *u*. Although in this case the *u* is close to the secret of vowellessness (*jazm*) and belongs to the diffused sense organ, as does vowellessness as well, there's a difference between the two—namely being without a vowel contains the secret of *u* and adds a similar secret to it. Indeed, the *u* is the root and the *sukūn* is something adventitious. Thus the original (the root) secret doesn't disappear with the presence of something adventitious. The absence of a vowel gives greater emphasis than the *u*. But since it's an adventitious branch which sometimes occurs and sometimes does not, the *u* has become more widely known and more frequent.

Likewise, the original secret is current among all the believers, and the adventitious secret is reserved for the elite few. The reading with *u* contains a general contraction for the public at large, while the reading without a vowel contains a contraction reserved for people who are special.

And another reading is: *iiyāka yu'badu*, i.e. in the passive voice with *yā'*, involving an apostrophe (*iltifāt*) with speech addressed to someone who's absent. (214) As for the internal level, the *u* which is with the *yā'* belongs to concentration, as does the *sukūn* with the 'ayn. In this case what one concentrates in order to avoid is the opposite of the meaning of *yā'* and the opposite of the meaning of 'ayn. *Yā'* belongs to fear of God the Sublime, and its opposite is absence of fear which is disobedience. 'Ayn belongs to forgiveness, and its opposite is injustice and wrongdoing. The speaker who

<sup>116</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 213; his name is 'Amr b. Fā'id; *A'lām* V, p. 83; *ThG* II, p. 81-84.

adopts this reading concentrates to avoid these two wicked things, after having taken on the attributes of the two letters. His concentration grows so strong that he becomes one of the knowers of God who live the life of the people of Paradise, and they're the people of the interior—God be pleased with them—who behold the worship of every one of God the Sublime's creatures and their glorification of Him. And the Most High has said:

'There is nothing that does not proclaim His praise' (17/44).

We would add that he becomes one of those who live the life of the people of Paradise because the *a* of the *bā'* in *yu'bad* means this, namely he who lives the life of the people of Paradise. The reading in question only arises from a knower of God.

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'This is the reading Sa'īd b. Jubayr<sup>117</sup>—God be pleased with him—used to adopt because he was one of the great knowers of God. God give us profit through him—amen!'

That's why the one who adopts this reading has no need of [expressly] including himself in worship, because he sees that no one is excluded from worshipping God the Sublime. This is in contrast to the reading with *nūn* and the active voice adopted by the multitude, where the speaker includes himself in the worship. But the latter reading is possible for the knower of God as well as others. Even if he's witnessed that no one is excluded from worshipping his Lord Most High, he includes himself for the sake of pleasure. If he hasn't beheld this, the reciter isn't a knower of God. None the less, the reading of the multitude is more appropriate because when the reciter engages in recitation, the lights of the letters' meanings burst into flame and the body of the speaker is given these lights to drink. Thus, if he recites with the *nūn*, he's included himself and he's given to drink the light of the meaning of the *nūn*. If he recites with the *yā'* (215) and he isn't a knower of God, the light that the *nūn* indicates escapes him. But our purpose is the recitation of the *Fātiḥa* with all its lights.

As for the knower of God, this doesn't escape him because of his seeing that no one is excluded from worshipping God the Sublime.

In short, adopting the reading with *nūn* is appropriate for the whole Muslim community, the knowers of God as well as the others. This

<sup>117</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 214; GAS I, pp. 28 f.; ThG, passim and 'Ḥurāsān', p. 539.

is in contrast to the reading with *yāʾ*. A person who recites with *yāʾ* is a knower of God without any doubt, because by his recitation he makes it known that he has fulfilled what's due unto God the Sublime and that's complete fear of Him—which is inferred from the *yāʾ*. Similarly, he fulfills what's due unto mankind and that's showing them forgiveness, being indulgent with them, and doing nothing bad to them—which is inferred from the *ʿayn*. Then when he has adorned himself with these two awesome things, he concentrates on avoiding their opposite—which is inferred from the *u* of the *yāʾ* and the *sukūn* of the *ʿayn*. This is an awesome situation. That's why he's given to drink what the people of Paradise are given to drink so that he lives the life they live.

And another reading is that some read: *naʿbudū*, i.e. with an additional *wāw* after the *dāl*. This is a tradition from Nāfi<sup>118</sup> which al-Iṣbahānī<sup>119</sup> transmitted from Warsh.<sup>120</sup> The reason for this is that the *ū* is written plene and that causes the *wāw* to come about. As for the internal reason, this reading adds the *wāw* to the reading of the multitude. Here the *wāw* belongs to lack of shame in speaking the truth. The meaning of lack of shame is that the bondsman makes it clear in his pronouncing the word that his worship is on behalf of his Lord Most High. Then he lengthens its sound by means of the *wāw*, as he stands before his Lord Most High, in order to affirm its meaning, give it emphasis, and express it without any doubt. Though this is a good idea, it would be better still if the bondsman didn't see any work as his own. And how should this not be so since his Lord is his creator and the creator of all that he does and omits to do? Hence the *wāw* is dropped in the reading of the multitude because here feeling shame is more appropriate than lack of shame, for the latter entails seeing one's own work which is a lack of proper behavior toward God—He is sublime!

(216) The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'The reading with *wāw* is sound and confirmed as being from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The preference of the multitude's reading is in relation to us, not in relation to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—since the readings in relation to

118 See fn. 25 above.

119 Probably Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣbahānī al-Naysābūrī; GAS I, p. 15; al-Jazarī, *Ghāya* I, pp. 49-50; died 381/991.

120 See fn. 54 above.

him—blessings and peace be upon him—follow the lights which God intended for him—He is exalted!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The *alif* isn’t written after the *wāw* in the *rasm* of this reading because if the *wāw* is only there to confirm the meaning of the word, *alif* isn’t added after it.’

And another reading is that of Yaḥyā b. Waththāb:<sup>121</sup> *nistaʿīn*, i.e. *nūn* with *i*. The reason for this is widespread idiom, though the most current idiom is *nūn* with *a*. As for the internal level, the secret of the *a* is different from the secret of the *i* because the *i* contains an exclusion of anyone but the speaker, in contrast to the *a*. The reason for this is that the *i* belongs to inner preception which in turn belongs to Adamhood, and you know that Adamhood contains proper behavior and humility. The *i* indicates the carnal soul (self) of the speaker which has become humble and learned proper behavior, and since this indication is limited to his self, it necessarily excludes anyone else. Hence the reading of the multitude is more appropriate because it’s of more general and greater benefit.

And another reading is the reading of ʿUmar—God be pleased with him: *ghayruʾl-maghḍūbi*, i.e. with *u* after *ghayr*. Others adopt a reading with *a*, which has been transmitted by Khalīl b. Aḥmad<sup>122</sup> from Ibn Kathīr,<sup>123</sup> whereas the reading of the multitude is *ghayr* with *i*. The explanation of this according to syntax is obvious. With regard to the internal level, it follows the secret of the three vowels. Now the *i* is included in Adamhood and here belongs to perfection of internal form. It contains in it immense proper behavior (*adab*). The reason for this is that the *i* indicates the particular individuals meant in *al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim*. Another indication is that they’re our own kind, indeed from among our relatives and our cousins originally. It’s as if the person who recites with the *i* says: ‘Not those whom You’re angry at, as for example the Jews, who are our relatives. Yet You’ve distinguished us above them by Your preference and guidance, due to Your bounty, oh Lord, and Your grace. Praise be unto You for this!’ Immense proper behavior is contained in this reading, and hence it’s been adopted by the multitude.

As for the reading with *u*, in it the individuals whom God is angry at are also present and the particular people are designated. One feels

<sup>121</sup> *Ghāya* II, p. 380; died 103/721.

<sup>122</sup> GAS VIII, pp. 51 ff.

<sup>123</sup> See fn. 26 above.

aversion toward them, keeps one's distance from them and disavows them. This is contained in the secret of *u* which belongs to contraction, aversion to the opposite, and disavowal. It doesn't contain the humility contained in the reading with *i*.

(217) As for the reading with *a*, it doesn't contain the specification of those whom God is angry at. Speech with *a* remains general, whereas adopting the previous two readings entails a generalization with intended specificity.

And another reading is that of Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī<sup>124</sup>—God have mercy on him: *wa-lā'l-ḍa'lin*, i.e. with the transformation of the *alif* into a *hamza* with *sukūn*. The explanation for this is rare usage in speech. As for the internal level, the *hamza* belongs to obedience and its *sukūn* belongs to obedience as well. Contained in it are two contractions, one from itself and the other from its vowel. This latter contraction is the contraction of obedience. The meaning of obedience is obedience to the view that those who go astray (*al-dāllin*) are our enemies and our enviers. And this *hamza* is as if one said: '...and not those who go astray (*wa-lā'l-dāllin*) for they are our enemies.' The *hamza* with *sukūn* assumes the place of this sentence. And yet the reading of the multitude is more appropriate because there's something in the lengthened *alif* and the secrets of its degrees as previously described which this reading can't fulfill.

This is some of what we heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—as an interpretation of these [different] readings and an explanation of them. Other readings also remain which the authorities on Qur'ānic recitation have mentioned, and the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—added still other readings to these along with explanations of them which I've omitted for fear of being burdensome and tedious. If I were to pursue this subject and record the relevant sciences contained in the Shaykh's interior—God be pleased with him—several volumes would prove insufficient for the task.

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However, we've recorded a certain number of matters that he mentioned—God be pleased with him—to which it's necessary to draw attention.

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<sup>124</sup> ThG II, pp. 342-52; died 131/749.



**Firstly**, there are the explanations found in his illuminated words—God be pleased with him—regarding the Prophet's interior—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And the attention he draws to the loftiness of the secrets of his noble heart and noble bodily frame—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Through this you come to know his rank—blessings and peace be upon him! Indeed, the lights of the forty-nine parts aren't found in anyone as they're found in him—blessings and peace be upon him! In him their realities rose aloft and in him their forms of knowledge and their secrets descended. Whoever wishes to increase his love for the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—let him make descend the first of these parts, then the second alongside it, and then the third, etc., until he completes all forty-nine of them. Then let him visualize the meanings they possess. From these let him make a single (218) entity whose light is composed of their lights. He'll see an immense light that can't be described or supported. Let him then place it within the interior of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! In this way he'll increase his love for the Prophet's noble person without any doubt. And in this way he'll obtain an elucidation of the Prophet's external and internal form—the best of blessings and purest of greetings be upon him!

**Secondly**, there's what he said in explanation of the spirit and his description of its praiseworthy characteristics and its strange and wondrous qualities, namely: its ability to taste, its discernment, deeper vision, lack of unawareness, power of penetration, and the fact that it experiences no pain from physical objects. Whoever has learned of these qualities and grasped the sense of their meanings, possesses great knowledge of the spirit and its essential attributes and peculiarities.

People have disagreed greatly among themselves about the spirit.<sup>125</sup> Some say: 'We won't enter into discussing this', and they shut the door without any further talk on the subject. Some are willing to discuss it and proceed along the path of its knowledge but then they have nothing in particular to say about it and their minds remain perplexed. What the Shaykh had to say—God be pleased with him—was exhaustive in detailing the peculiarities and essential attributes of the spirit. Whoever wishes to delve into the subject of

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<sup>125</sup> This has to do with the *mas'alat al-rūh*; on this subject see Radtke, 'Ibn Ṭufayl', p. 187; on the *rūh* see 'Der Ibrīz', p. 328.

the spirit, let him travel the path of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! As for the nature of the spirit, its body (*dhāt*), what it's akin to and differs from, what it was like before it entered [physical] shapes, we've heard wonder upon wonder from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and some of this will appear in the present book—if God the Sublime is willing!

**Thirdly**, there's what he said in explanation of the divine insights of the Friends of God—God be pleased with them! By means of this you'll know what Friendship with God (*walāya*) and divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*) are. Indeed, the only difference between a Friend of God and someone else is that in the Friend what stands between the body and the spirit has been 'opened'. The person whose body has had the secrets of his spirit made open (*futiḥa*) for him and for whom the veil between body and spirit has been removed is the 'illuminated' Friend of God with divine knowledge (*al-walī al-ʿarīf ṣāhib al-faḥḥ*), whereas the person whose body has remained veiled from his spirit is one of the ordinary people—nor does it matter whether he flies in the air or walks on water. If I were to explain what I've heard from the Shaykh on this subject—God be pleased with him—I'd have much to say and perhaps something of this will appear in the present book. But God knows best!

**Fourthly**, there's the explanation he gave about the eminent *ḥadīth* [on the seven letters] and his application of it to the internal lights and the secrets of the Prophet's noble heart—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Indeed, he's a noble prophet (*nabī*) and a great apostle (*rasūl*)—blessings and peace be upon him—(219) and he possesses an immense interior and a heart filled with lights. The Qurʾān descended upon his heart which has this awesome quality. And the Shaykh's explanation—God be pleased with him—gave an exhaustive account of all these secrets and included all these lights.

As for someone who explains the *ḥadīth* by limiting it to its external sense and merely in terms of the Arabic language, his explanation has no connection with the station of prophethood and apostleship, because treating the differences of pronunciation without treating the difference in secrets of the interior only arises from an interior devoid of the secrets. And still further removed is the explanation of someone who explains it on the basis of *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām* (permitted and forbidden), *waʿd* and *waʿīd* (promise and threat), *khabar* and *istikhbār* (report and inquiry), and *nidāʾ*

(summoning). Indeed, this isn't something about which it's appropriate to say:

'This Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān has been sent down upon seven letters (*aḥruf*). Read it in whatever way is easy.'

Nor is it correct that the Companions quarreled about these matters. And the same is true of whoever explains them in terms of *amr* and *nahy* (command and prohibition), and *wa<sup>c</sup>d* and *wa<sup>c</sup>īd*, or other things that have been mentioned. In short, the intelligent, sensible person recognizes the truth when he hears it.

**Fifthly**, if you reflect on what the authorities on the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān—God be pleased with them—say in explanation of the previous readings and you reflect on what the Shaykh has said on this matter—God be pleased with him—you'll understand how far apart the two positions are. Of course, what they say is true in itself but it remains general and isn't peculiar to our Prophet with regard to his being our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Thus what they say to explain the reading with *sukūn* on the *lām* in *malk yawm al-dīn*, namely that it serves to lighten it, as in the words *ʿadd* and *katf*, is found everywhere in the pronunciation of Arabic. Indeed, it also occurs in *katf* and *ʿadd*, although neither of these is in the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān. What a difference between this and the secret concerning the matter previously treated by the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! And the same is true of what they say to explain the reading *īyyāka yu<sup>c</sup>bad*, i.e. that it's in the passive voice involving apostrophe (*iltifāt*). Apostrophe is found in the Arabic language in general. What a difference between this and the secret by which he clarified the secret of the *yā<sup>ʾ</sup>* and the secret of its special vowel, the secret of the *ʿayn* and the secret of its special *sukūn*, the secret of the *bā<sup>ʾ</sup>* and the secret of its special *a*, and the secret of the *dāl* and the secret of its special vowel!

**Sixthly**, beware of thinking that the noble Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān is explained in full by these 'seven internal letters' and that the letters are its meaning. Should you think this, you'd by no means be right. Rather (220) the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān possesses a meaning which includes the sciences of the first and the last people. These seven internal letters are like the garment and the clothes for that meaning. Now the meaning is one thing and its clothing is something else. If you reflect on what was said previously about the *Fātiḥa*, you'll have some inkling of this. Were the Qur<sup>ʾ</sup>ān to be explained in terms of its real meaning, the

exterior of the Qurʾān as well as its interior would be understood. From its interior would be understood the way the spirits were before they entered physical shapes and how they'll be after separation [from shapes]. Likewise, from its interior would be understood how to extract from the noble Qurʾān all forms of knowledge that created beings among the inhabitants of the heavens and the earths are capable of grasping, and how the *sharīʿa*, indeed all holy laws, are derived from it, and everything we indicated about the previously described parts of science: knowledge of final outcomes, the sciences that deal with the affairs of the two worlds, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, knowledge of all languages, and other things we did and did not mention. All of this is one drop in the ocean which is his interior—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Were the noble Qurʾān understood in this manner and were this explanation added to the lights of these seven letters and the meanings dressed in their clothes, minds would be dazzled by what appeared and confused upon hearing it. At the same time one would realize that though the inhabitants of the heavens and the earth joined together in an effort to produce a single line of the Qurʾān, they wouldn't be able to do so. He is sublime Who distinguished our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with secrets that are indescribable and can't be supported!

**Seventhly**, there's no hope of anyone acquiring knowledge of the secrets behind the pronunciation of these letters (*hurūf*) which are in the Qurʾān and the reason why each letter is specially distinguished by the secret that distinguishes it—as in the case of the *hamza* being distinguished by obedience, the *bāʾ* by tranquillity, the *yāʾ* by perfection of the external senses, and the others as described previously. The only person capable of this is someone who possesses illumination (*fath*) and divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*), someone endowed with witnessing and direct vision. Similarly, the inflection of vowel endings (*al-ḥarakāt al-iʿrābiyya*) are distinguished by secrets unique unto themselves. These too can only be understood through illumination. If there were a rule about these secrets and special distinctions, it would provide people with access to the secrets mentioned above. Let whoever wishes to learn this speak to those who know about it, and let him ask about each letter

and each vowel. He'll be given help to reach the truth—if God is willing!

'My success lies in God alone. I have put my trust in Him and unto Him I turn in contrition' (11/88).

(221) **Eighthly**, what was said earlier about the matter of *rasm*, namely that it's been established by the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and it has its secrets which distinguish it. This removes all the difficulties that occur in connection with the *rasm* of the Qur'ān. However, most people are of the opinion that *rasm* is based on agreed usage among the Companions—God be pleased with them—and they fall into two groups. 1) The one group considers agreed usage of the Companions to be correct. They say: 'It contains secrets, some of which we've understood and some of which we have not. What we've understood is the intelligible part of the meaning, and what we haven't understood is like things to do with superrational matters (*ta'abbudī*).<sup>126</sup> All of it's correct.' What escapes them is that such is the case with God's ordinances—He is exalted—but it's never like this with the agreed usage of people. What they say is correct for what's fixed (*tawqīf*)<sup>127</sup> but not for agreed convention (*iṣṭilāḥ*).<sup>128</sup> 2) And the other group doesn't consider this agreed usage to be correct. They say: 'The Arabs weren't familiar with writing. Hence what happened among the Companions happened.' The words of al-Farrā' cited earlier<sup>129</sup> refer to this, and Abū Ishāq al-Tha'labī,<sup>130</sup> the Qur'ān commentator, transmits them from him in connection with God the Sublime's words: 'Those who devour usury...' (2/275).

Among those who held this view was the support of religion, Ibn Khaldūn, in the *Muqaddima* of his large history.<sup>131</sup>

**Ninthly**, [there are] the two questions that I put to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! **The first question:** I said to him—God be pleased with him: 'We divided up the letters among the internal lights, and certain letters emerged as belonging to Adamhood, i.e. *tā'*, *zā'*, *mīm*, *ṣād* and *ʿayn*, some to contraction, i.e. *hamza*, *thā'*,

<sup>126</sup> Cf. ThG, index wörter/termini, s.v. *ʿbd*.

<sup>127</sup> See fn. 77 above.

<sup>128</sup> See Appendix, pp. 930 f.

<sup>129</sup> See fn. 61 above.

<sup>130</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 133, XXV; died 427/1035; for more on Tha'labī see Saleh, *Formation*, pp. 25 ff.; Schöck, *Adam*, p. 33.

<sup>131</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 133, XXVI; died 808/1406; *The Muqadimmah* II, p. 382.

*shīn* and *hāʾ*, some to expansion, i.e. *rāʾ*, *nūn*, and *sīn*, and some to prophethood, i.e. *jīm*, *ḥāʾ*, *kāf*, *dād*, *ʿayn* and *yāʾ*. (222) The letters belonging to the spirit are: *khāʾ*, *dāl*, *ṭāʾ*, *qāf* and *lām-alif*, and there are two letters belonging to science: *dhāl* and *fāʾ*. The letters belonging to apostleship are: *bāʾ*, *zāʾ*, *lām* and *wāw*. Now these letters are also found in the speech of people and aren't exclusive to the noble Qurʾān. Hence all speech that contains these letters should necessarily be sent down upon "seven letters", whereas this effect is exclusive to the noble Qurʾān and not the case with any other heavenly books, to say nothing of other ordinary books. In this connection it's reported in a sound *ḥadīth* that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said to Ibn Masʿūd:<sup>132</sup>

"The books used to descend from the heavens through one door upon one reading (*ʿalā ḥarfīn wāḥidin*), but the Qurʾān was sent down through seven doors upon seven *ahruf*, etc."

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: 'This way of dividing up the letters is exclusive to the letters of the Qurʾān and isn't the case with any other letters. Not every *hamza* belongs to contraction, not every *bāʾ* to tranquillity, not every *tāʾ* to perfection of the external senses, not every *jīm* to patience, not every *ḥāʾ* to mercy, not every *khāʾ* to tasting lights—but only on the condition that they occur in the noble Qurʾān. If they occur in other words which aren't in the Qurʾān, they're divided up differently, namely the twenty-nine letters are limited to the seven parts of Adamhood. Perfection of internal form from among those parts belongs to all the letters (consonants) and they come forth upon it and their sounds are [formed] from its light. Masculinity belongs to *u*, and perfection of external form to *a*, and perfect reason to *i*. Perfection of inner perception belongs to vowellessness, removing Satan's allotment to lengthening the *alif*, and perfection of the external senses to lengthening the *yāʾ*. As for lengthening the *wāw*, it takes one part from removal of Satan's allotment and another from perfection of the external senses. This is the division of the letters found in the heavenly books apart from the noble Qurʾān, as well as in the traditions, divine or otherwise, and in the speech of people. And in Adamhood are contained the internal lights of the [other] six

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<sup>132</sup> Cf. EI, s.n. Ibn Masʿūd.

“letters”, i.e. contraction, expansion, prophethood, the spirit, science and apostleship, which are calm and at rest without flaring up.’

(223) I then said: ‘The six lights are found in the bodies of all the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them! Thus if a book was sent down to them, it must necessarily have been sent down upon these lights and been sent down upon seven letters.’

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘These lights were present in their bodies—blessings and peace be upon them—the same way they were present in the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—when he uttered the traditions, divine or otherwise. But their presence doesn’t necessitate the flaring up of their lights and the occurrence of the secrets. Their lights only flare up in the noble Qur’ān because of a secret within what’s sent down and a secret in the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon them! The [other] heavenly books lack this second secret because his body—blessings and peace be upon him—wasn’t in them, whereas the prophetic traditions lack the first secret. As for all speech of the people, it lacks both these secrets.’

The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—explained the first and the second secrets as only being understandable through true unveiling and clear knowledge imparted directly from God (*al-‘ilm al-ladunī*).

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is why the Qur’ān is inimitable (*mu‘jiz*).<sup>133</sup> There can be no objection regarding its composition, verbal constructions and its meanings. Objection to the composition and verbal construction in the other heavenly books can occur, even though there’s no objection to their meanings which belong to God’s eternal word. But God knows best!’

**The second question:** concerns harmonizing the Shaykh’s explanation—God be pleased with him—with the *ḥadīths* on this subject. Let’s now set forth these *ḥadīths* and when we’ve finished with them, we’ll come back to harmonizing them with his explanation.

Among these is the *ḥadīth* of ‘Umar with Hishām b. Ḥakīm<sup>134</sup> which is accepted as authentic. The story is well known in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī and in works by others. Ibn Ḥajar says: ‘One finds in

<sup>133</sup> See p. 193, fn. 206, on *i‘jāz*.

<sup>134</sup> See p. 206, fn. 7.

al-Ṭabarī,<sup>135</sup> transmitted from Ishāq b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Ṭalḥa<sup>136</sup>—from his father—from his grandfather:

“A man recited from the Qurʾān and ʿUmar corrected him. They quarrelled in the presence of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! The man said: ‘Didn’t you teach me to recite, oh Apostle of God?’ He replied: ‘Yes, I did.’ Then something came to pass in ʿUmar’s breast. The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—perceived it in his face and struck him on the chest, saying: ‘Banish Satan hence!’ And he repeated it three times. Then he said: ‘Oh ʿUmar, the whole Qurʾān is correct as long as you don’t transform a mercy into a punishment or a punishment into a mercy.’”<sup>137</sup>

Another is the *ḥadīth* of Ubayy b. Kaʿb:<sup>138</sup>

(224) ‘I went into the mosque to perform the prayers and a man entered who began to recite [the surah] *The Bee*. But he recited differently from me. When he turned to leave, I asked: “Who taught you to recite?” He replied: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!” Then another man arrived and stood to perform the prayers. And he began to recite *The Bee* and he recited differently from me and from the first man. When he turned to leave, I asked: “Who taught you to recite?” He replied: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!” Doubt and denial stronger than had existed in the Age of Ignorance (*al-jāhiliyya*) entered my heart. I took both men by the hand and went with them to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And I said: “Ask these two to recite.” He asked one of them to recite and then he said: “Well done!” Doubt and denial greater than had existed in the Age of Ignorance entered my heart. Then the other one recited and the Prophet said: “Well done!” Again doubt and denial greater than existed in the Age of Ignorance entered my heart. The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—struck my chest with his hand and said: “I ask God to protect you against doubt, oh Ubayy.” Then he said: “Gabriel—peace be upon him—came to me and said:

<sup>135</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 133, XXV; cf. *Faḥ* X, p. 29, where it’s stated that al-Ṭabarī said the surah in question was surah XVI (*al-Nahl*). This isn’t mentioned in al-Ṭabarī’s Qurʾān commentary where surah XVI is discussed (*Tafsīr* XIV, pp. 39-134).

<sup>136</sup> TT I, p. 239, no. 448.

<sup>137</sup> Not found in the *Faḥ*; nor in *Concordance*.

<sup>138</sup> See p. 206, fn. 8.



‘Your Lord—He is mighty and glorious—orders you to recite the Qur’ān upon one letter (*ḥarf*).’ I replied: ‘Oh Lord God, make it lighter for my community!’ When Gabriel returned, he said: ‘Your Lord—He is mighty and glorious—orders you to recite the Qur’ān upon two letters.’ Again I said: ‘Oh Lord God, make it lighter for my community!’ When he returned, he said: ‘Verily, your Lord—He is mighty and glorious—orders you to recite the Qur’ān upon seven letters (*aḥruf*). And for every letter He’s granted you a request.’”<sup>139</sup>

This *ḥadīth* is transmitted by al-Ḥārith<sup>140</sup> b. Abī Usāma with the same wording in his *Musnad*. Ibn al-Jazarī cites it in the *Nashr*.<sup>141</sup> And it occurs in a different wording in Muslim:

‘From Ubayy b. Ka’b: “Gabriel met the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—at Aḏāt Banī Ghifār and said to him: ‘God orders you to recite the Qur’ān for your community upon one letter (*ḥarf*).’ The Prophet replied: ‘I ask God for His exemption and His help. My community can’t support this.’ Then Gabriel came to him a second time with two letters, and the Prophet said the same thing to him. He then returned a third time with three letters, and again the Prophet said the same thing. Then he came a fourth time and said to the Prophet: ‘Verily, God orders you to recite the Qur’ān upon seven letters (*aḥruf*), and whichever letter they recite it upon they’ll be correct.’”<sup>142</sup>

Ibn Ḥajar says: ‘Aḏāt Banī Ghifār, with *a* on the *hamza* and *ḍād* without *hamza* and a feminine *tā’* on the end, is a swamp resembling a pond. Its plural is *aḏā* like *‘aṣā* (sing. *‘aṣāt*). And it’s a place (225) in the Prophet’s city Medina. It’s named after the Banū Ghifār, with *i* on the *ghayn* and *fā’* without *tashdīd*, because they resided there.’<sup>143</sup>

And another version occurs in Muslim, transmitted from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Laylā<sup>144</sup>—from Ubayy b. Ka’b:

‘Ubayy said: “I was inside the mosque and a man came in to perform the prayers. He recited with a reading which I disapproved of. Then another man entered and recited with a different reading than the first man. When we finished the prayers, we went together

<sup>139</sup> Not in *Concordance*.

<sup>140</sup> Text amended; on him see *Siyar* XIII, p. 388; GAS I, p. 160; died 282/895.

<sup>141</sup> *Nashr* I, p. 20, ll. 6-20.

<sup>142</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 448; Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* II, p. 203 (*musāfirīn*).

<sup>143</sup> Not in the *Fatḥ*; Yāqūt, *Buldān* I, p. 304.

<sup>144</sup> ThG I, p. 187; died 148/765.

to see the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! I said: ‘This person recited with a reading I disapproved of, and the other here came in and recited with a different reading from the first one.’ The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—ordered both of them to recite and then praised their recitation.” Ubayy said: “It occurred to me: ‘This kind of thing didn’t happen when I was still in the Age of Ignorance.’ The Prophet struck me on my chest and I broke out in a sweat. It was as if I beheld God in fear. And the Prophet said: ‘Oh Ubayy, it was sent unto me so that I recite the Qurʾān, etc.’”<sup>145</sup>

In al-Ṭabarī it says in this *ḥadīth*:

‘Then Satan’s temptation entered into me so that my face became red, and the Prophet struck my chest and said: “Oh Lord God, drive Satan far from him!”’<sup>146</sup>

And in al-Ṭabarī there’s another version in which this happened between Ubayy and Ibn Masʿūd. ‘The Prophet said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: (226) “Both of you have done well! Both of you have done nicely!” Ubayy said: “I exclaimed: ‘We haven’t both done well! We haven’t both done nicely!’” And Ubayy reported: “He struck my chest, etc.”’<sup>147</sup>

Another is the *ḥadīth* of ʿAmr b. al-ʿĀṣ:<sup>148</sup> ‘A man recited a verse from the Qurʾān. ʿAmr said: “It should be recited this way and that way.” He mentioned this to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who said:

“The Qurʾān has been sent down upon seven letters (*aḥruf*). Whichever of these you recite you’ve recited correctly. Don’t quarrel among yourselves about it!”

Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal]<sup>149</sup> presents the same *ḥadīth* with a good chain of transmission.<sup>150</sup> Likewise, Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal], Abū ʿUbayd and al-Ṭabarī also transmit a *ḥadīth* from Abū Juhaym:<sup>151</sup> ‘Two men disagreed over a verse from the Qurʾān. Each one of them claimed he’d received it from the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’ The rest is like the *ḥadīth* of ʿAmr b. ʿĀṣ.

<sup>145</sup> Muslim, *Ṣaḥīḥ* II, p. 203.

<sup>146</sup> Quoted in *Faṭḥ* X, p. 29.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> See p. 202, fn. 2.

<sup>149</sup> See p. 146, fn. 109.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. *Concordance* VI, p. 205.

<sup>151</sup> See p. 206, fn. 12.

Al-Ṭabarī and al-Ṭabarānī<sup>152</sup> transmit the following from Zayd b. Arqam:<sup>153</sup> ‘He said:

“A man came to the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and said: ‘Ibn Mas‘ūd taught me to recite a surah and Zayd taught it to me and Ubayy b. Ka‘b taught it to me. But their way of reciting it was different. Whose way of reciting am I to adopt?’ The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—remained silent. (227) ‘Alī was at his side and ‘Alī said: ‘Let each person among you recite the way he understands. That’s fine and good.’”<sup>154</sup>

Ibn Ḥibbān<sup>155</sup> and al-Ḥākim<sup>156</sup> transmit a *ḥadīth* from Ibn Mas‘ūd who said:

‘The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—taught me to recite from [the surah] *The House of ‘Imrān*. I went to the mosque and said to a man: “Recite that surah for me!” And behold he recited letters which I didn’t recite. And he said: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—taught me to recite this.” We went before the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and informed him [of the situation]. His face became transformed and he said: “Those before you were destroyed by disagreement.” He then whispered something to ‘Alī and ‘Alī said: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—orders that each person should recite the way he understands.” We departed and every man among us recited letters which his companions didn’t recite.’

Al-Tirmidhī<sup>157</sup> presents a different version:

‘The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said: “Oh Gabriel, I’ve been sent to a community of unlettered people. They consist of old ladies, aged men, and young men and young women, as well as men who’ve never read a book.” Gabriel said: “Order them to recite the Qur’ān upon seven letters (*aḥruf*).”<sup>158</sup>

<sup>152</sup> GAS I, p. 195; died 360/971; ‘Ibriziana’, p. 133, XXIX.

<sup>153</sup> *Wāfi* XV, p. 22, no. 26; died 66/685 or 68/687.

<sup>154</sup> Not found in al-Ṭabarānī.

<sup>155</sup> GAS I, p. 189; died 354/965; ‘Ibriziana’, p. 133, XXX; not found in Ibn Ḥibbān, *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

<sup>156</sup> GAS I, p. 221 f.; ‘Ibriziana’, p. 133, XXX; died 404/1014.

<sup>157</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 98.

<sup>158</sup> In *Concordance* one only finds a reference to *Musnad Ahmad b. Hanbal* V, p. 405.

There are numerous variants of the *ḥadīth*. If we pursued them all, the matter would become tedious. Their external wording testifies that the meaning of *ahruf* is the differences in pronunciation which is proven by what the Prophet reported: ‘Whichever letter they recite it upon they’ll be correct.’

And the words: ‘We departed and every man among us recited letters which his companions didn’t recite’, as well as: ‘Gabriel came to him the first time with one letter, then he came to him a second time with two letters, then a third time with three letters, and then he came to him a fourth time with seven letters’—this can only refer to differences (228) in pronunciation, because the internal letters belong to the nature of the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and thus it isn’t possible for him to present it one time with one letter, then a second time with two letters, etc. Indeed, the entirety was in the interior of the Prophet beforehand—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And in particular there’s the request of the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—made to his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—that the Qur’ān be sent down upon seven letters. This took place in Medina, as described previously in the *ḥadīth* of Ubayy b. Ka’b.

And al-Dabbāgh **replied**—God be pleased with him: ‘The differences in pronunciation are like the shadow, while the internal lights are like the gnomon (*al-shākhis*). Whoever acknowledges the shadow doesn’t deny the gnomon or consider it invalid. But in reality he acknowledges it because there’s no shadow without a gnomon. Consequently, oneness in the shadow requires oneness in the gnomon, and multiplicity in the shadow requires multiplicity in the gnomon. Now if Gabriel brings the Prophet one letter from the gnomon, this means he designates it as a way of reciting, even if it existed beforehand. And if he brings him two letters from the shadow, he brings him two letters from the gnomon, meaning he designates them as a way of reciting, even if they existed beforehand in the Prophet’s noble nature and his lofty temperament. And if he brings him seven letters from the shadow, then he has him recite on the basis of all seven internal lights.’

I said: ‘We have come to understand the internal seven—praise be to God—through your blessing and your generosity. As for the seven to do with pronunciation, what are these? Are they differences of language, as is the view of some groups, though they disagree on

how to determine what they are? Or are they the different ordinances, as is the view of others who argue on the basis of Ibn Masʿūd's *ḥadīth* which is traceable back to the Prophet. Ibn Masʿūd said:

"The first book [ever to come down] came down through one gate upon one letter. But the Qurʾān came down through seven gates upon seven letters: suppression and command, permitted and forbidden, fixed [in meaning] and ambiguous, and illustrative examples. Therefore allow what it allows, forbid what it forbids, do what I've commanded you, refrain from what I've prohibited you from doing, take warning from its examples, act on the basis of its fixed meaning, believe in what's ambiguous in it, and say: 'We believe in it. All of it comes from our Lord.'" <sup>159</sup>

The opponents of the latter group reply: "This *ḥadīth* isn't authentic because there's a gap in its chain of transmission between Abū Salama b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān<sup>160</sup> and ʿAbd Allāh b. Masʿūd. Indeed, Ibn Masʿūd never met him but he transmits from him."

Or are they various categories of different readings? Again in determining these categories there are groups with different views. But here it isn't the seven (*ahruf*) that are meant. What's meant is enlargement and facilitation [in pronunciation], without a specific number. The Prophet's words: "It was sent down (229) upon seven letters" mean it was sent down for ease, enlargement and facilitation. Let everyone recite whatever way is easy for him. And there are groups who have held this view.'

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: 'This is a question of the different categories of readings. But what can we say to them since we weren't taught Qurʾānic recitation during our childhood. For my part I behold the categories that the different readings adopted by the Prophet ended up in—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and I don't know how to report on them.' Then he went on to indicate—God be pleased with him—what he had directly before his eyes. He offered similitudes to make it clear and to define particular cases for us until we understood what he meant—praise be to God!

<sup>159</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 227, on al-Ḥākim; a short version of the *ḥadīth* occurs in Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal, *Musnad* I, p. 445.

<sup>160</sup> On him TT XII, p. 115, no. 537.

We presented this to him time after time and he said: 'That's what I meant', and that difference [in readings] is limited to seven categories:

The first includes different readings concerning the vowels, the *sukūn* and the forms of *ʿirāb*, e.g. *lahum ʿadhābun min rijzin alīmun* (45/11), with *i* in *alīm* i.e. *ilīm*, and with *u* i.e. *ulīm*.

The second includes different readings that involve adding or removing letters, e.g. *wa-sāriʿū* (3/133) and *sāriʿū*, as well as *wa-qālūʾttakhadhaʾllāhu waladan* (2/116) and *qālūʾttakhadhaʾllāhu waladan*.

The third includes different readings that involve adding or removing words, e.g. *innaʾllāha huwaʾl-ghanīʾl-ḥamīd* (31/26), with or without the word *huwa*.

The fourth includes different readings that involve changing the word order, e.g. *wa-qutīlū wa-qātalū*, with the first verb in the passive voice and the second in the active. And then the reverse, e.g. *fa-yaqtulūna wa-yuqatalūna waʿdan ʿalayhi ḥaqqan* (9/111). And there are cases that can be read both ways, e.g. *wa-jāʾat sakratuʾl-mawti biʾl-ḥaqq* (50/19), (230) which is also read as: *wa-jāʾat sakratuʾl-ḥaqqi biʾl-mawti*. The latter is the reading adopted by Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him—Ibn Masʿūd, Ṭalḥa b. Muṣarrif<sup>161</sup> and Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn.<sup>162</sup>

The fifth includes different readings that involve the pronunciation of letters, e.g. *ṣirāṭ* pronounced with *ishmām* but without pronouncing the *ṣād* with *ishmām*. Or the different pronunciations of the *qāf* in *qīla*, i.e. with *i* and *ishmām*. And the same is true of *ḥīla*, *jīʾa*, *sīʾa*, and *sīqa*. And *al-ṣalāt* where the *lām* is pronounced emphatically, as well as softly. And similarly the *rāʾ* in a word like *mundhir* is pronounced emphatically and softly.

The sixth includes different readings that involve *a*, *imāla*, assimilation (*idghām*), and non-assimilation (*izhār*).

The seventh includes different readings that involve slowing down and accelerating the recitation, for sometimes the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—articulated slowly and other times he recited quickly.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'These different variants are connected to the internal lights in addition to the division

<sup>161</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 230; died 113/730; *Aʿlām* III, p. 230.

<sup>162</sup> The fourth Imam of the Shīʿites; cf. EI s.n.

of the letters and vowels that was previously described. And reciting slowly and with clear articulation arises from the spirit, whereas quick recitation with precise final vowels arises from contraction. *Imāla* arises from prophethood, (231) and vocalizing with *a* from apostleship. Every *ishmām* belongs to the spirit, whereas the absence of it belongs to prophethood. Adding letters belongs to contraction, removing them to the spirit. Adding a word belongs to apostleship, removing a word belongs to science. Advancing a word belongs to Adamhood, postponing a word belongs to science. All the vowels concerning which there's no disagreement, as for example: *wa-wajadaka ḍāllan fa-hadā* (93/7), belong to expansion.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, say that these were his illuminated words—God be pleased with him! Ibn Qutayba<sup>163</sup> enumerates the variant readings in the *Mushkil*<sup>164</sup> and Ibn al-Jazarī cites his words in the *Nashr*,<sup>165</sup> as does Ibn Ḥajar in the *Sharḥ*.<sup>166</sup> Qāsim b. Thābit<sup>167</sup> opposes Ibn Qutayba in the *Dalā'il*. Abū'l-Faḍl al-Rāzī<sup>168</sup> also enumerates them, and so does Ibn al-Jazarī with only a slight divergence between them. The same is true of the judge Abū Bakr [al-Bāqillānī] in the book the *Intiṣār*.<sup>169</sup>

If you reflect on what they enumerate and compare it with what the Shaykh has enumerated—God be pleased with him—the truth will be made clear for you—if God is willing—especially as the Shaykh's enumeration—God be pleased with him—arises from true unveiling; for the only thing he knows about Qur'ānic recitation comes from what he witnessed through his clear unveiling; and especially as what he enumerated is connected to the internal lights which were previously described.

This is the end of al-Dabbāgh's words on this question. God the Sublime give us profit through them in this world and in the world to come! Verily, He is all-hearing and close at hand. God is our sufficiency and the best of protectors!

<sup>163</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 134, XXXII; died 276/884.

<sup>164</sup> The verse is dealt with in *Mushkil*, p. 353, but no variant readings are discussed there.

<sup>165</sup> Not found in the *Nashr*.

<sup>166</sup> Not found in the *Faṭḥ*.

<sup>167</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 134, XXXIII; in addition: GAS VIII, p. 252; on *gharīb al-ḥadīth*; died 302/915.

<sup>168</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 134, XXXIV; died circa 631/1233.

<sup>169</sup> See p. 196, fn. 208; probably corresponds to *Intiṣār*, pp. 114 ff.

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And I asked him about the saying of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'The true dream of an upright man is one of forty-six parts of prophethood.'<sup>170</sup> Al-Bukhārī and others transmit it in this form.<sup>171</sup> And Muslim also transmits it as a *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayra in the form: 'one of forty-five parts.'<sup>172</sup>

Al-Ṭabarī as well as the Imām Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal]<sup>173</sup> transmit it from °Abd Allāh b. °Amr b. °Āṣ in the form: 'one of forty-nine parts.'

(232) It occurs in the *Sharḥ* of al-Qurṭubī<sup>174</sup> as: 'one of forty-seven parts.'

Al-Ṭabarī also transmits it from °Ubāda<sup>175</sup> as: 'one of forty-four parts.'

Ibn °Abd al-Barr<sup>176</sup> transmits it from Anas—with an interrupted *isnād* (*mawqūf*)—as: 'one of twenty-six parts.'

It occurs in the *Sharḥ* of al-Nawawī as: 'one of twenty-four parts.'<sup>177</sup>

It occurs in the *Sharḥ* of Ibn Abī Jamra<sup>178</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—as: 'one of twenty-five parts.'<sup>179</sup>

And it also occurs in Ibn Abī Jamra as: 'one of twenty-seven parts.'

That makes nine traditions, five of them in the forties, four in the twenties. But there are other traditions as well, i.e. one with the number seventy, one with seventy-two, one with seventy-six, then one with fifty, one with forty, and one with forty-two. That comes to fifteen traditions. The best of these is the tradition with forty-six and then the one with forty-five. Concerning the others there's dispute, except for the tradition with seventy which Muslim presents in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>180</sup> as being from Ibn °Umar—God be pleased with him!

<sup>170</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 343.

<sup>171</sup> *Faṭḥ* XIV, p. 385.

<sup>172</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ* VII, p. 52.

<sup>173</sup> *Musnad* II, p. 219.

<sup>174</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 134, XXXV; died 671/1273.

<sup>175</sup> °Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit, *Usd* III, p. 160, no. 2789.

<sup>176</sup> *Tamhīd* I, pp. 279, 280; XVII, p. 9.

<sup>177</sup> Al-Nawawī, *Sharḥ* XV, pp. 20 f., doesn't speak of twenty-four parts.

<sup>178</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 134, XXXVII; died 699/1300.

<sup>179</sup> The edition of the *Mukhtaṣar* at our disposal only mentions the possibility of six (al-Shanawānī, *Hāshiya °alā Mukhtaṣar Ibn Abī Jamra*, p. 205, no. 277).

<sup>180</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ* VII, pp. 53 f.



I asked al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him: ‘What’s meant by the parts of prophethood? And what’s the wisdom behind the divergence of these traditions. And can they be reconciled and the *ḥadīth* be deduced from all of them? This is something which has perplexed the minds of the most eminent of the great *ḥadīth* scholars, and they have by no means settled the matter.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The parts of prophethood are what was previously explained about the parts of Adamhood, the parts of contraction and expansion, and the parts of prophethood itself.

(233) As for the parts of Adamhood, they include perfection of external form, perfection of the external senses, perfection of internal form, perfection of the internal senses, masculinity, removal of Satan’s allotment, and perfect reason. They come to seven parts.

As for the parts of contraction, they include the sense organ diffused throughout the body, justice, aversion to the opposite, lack of shame in speaking the truth, obedience to the command, inclination for one’s own kind, and the perfect power of concentration. And they come to seven.

As for the parts of expansion, they include perfect joy, settling of the good in the body, opening of the external senses, opening of the internal senses, the station of loftiness, readiness to pardon, and lowering the wing of humility. And these come to seven.

As for the parts of prophethood itself, they include speaking the truth, patience, perfect mercy, knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—complete fear of Him, loathing the false, and forgiveness. And they come to seven.

The total of these comes to twenty-eight.’

A proper explanation of these parts has already been presented which you may consult earlier in this book.

‘Next you may drop masculinity from this enumeration because the dream is common to both men and women. Then twenty-seven parts remain. The referred to tradition from Ibn Abī Jamra indicating twenty-seven accords with this. If we drop perfection of external form because even if it’s one of the parts of prophethood, the dream has no connection with it, what remains is twenty-six. The said tradition from Ibn ʿAbd al-Barr indicating twenty-six accords with this. If we drop perfection of internal form for the same reason, what remains is twenty-five. The said tradition from Ibn Abī Jamra

indicating twenty-five accords with this. And if we drop perfection of the external senses for this reason, what remains is twenty-four, and the referred to tradition from al-Nawawī indicating twenty-four accords with this.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is the situation if dividing prophethood into parts takes place without apostleship. Otherwise, the parts of the spirit are added to the previous number, they being: tasting lights, purity, (234) discernment, deeper vision, lack of unawareness, the power of penetration, and the spirit’s not feeling pains caused by physical objects. They come to seven. Also added to these are the parts of science which consist of conveying knowledge, lack of squandering, knowledge of all languages including everything birds and animals utter, knowledge of final outcomes, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of both worlds, knowledge of the sciences that deal with the affairs of mankind and the Jinn, and limiting the directions to the forward direction. They come to seven. Also added to these are the parts of apostleship which consist of the spirit’s repose within the body in contentment, in love and in acceptance, perfect science regarding the hidden and the visible, truthfulness toward everyone, tranquillity and dignity, perfect vision, “he dies while still alive”, and his living the life of the people of Paradise. These come to seven. Altogether that is twenty-one which is to be added to twenty-eight. The total comes to forty-nine. The tradition of al-Ṭabarī and Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] from °Abd Allāh b. °Amr al-°Āṣ accords with this, i.e. “one of forty-nine parts”. If we drop masculinity and perfection of external form, what remains is forty-seven. The tradition of al-Qurṭubī accords with this, namely “one of forty-seven parts”. If along with that we drop perfection of internal form, what remains is forty-six. This accords with the authentic, accepted tradition from al-Bukhārī already referred to. If we also drop perfection of the external senses, what remains is forty-five.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is the explanation of these eight traditions. As for the remaining seven traditions, I don’t know how to explain their soundness.’

I said: ‘But in this explanation you present and in this way of working out the sense, the dream isn’t counted among the parts of prophethood. The *ḥadīth*, however, requires that the dream be among its parts because the Prophet said—God’s blessings and peace be

upon him: "The true dream of an upright man is one of forty-six parts of prophethood."

Consequently, it must necessarily be one of these parts, and yet you don't include it in your enumeration.'

Then he replied—God be pleased with him: 'The true dream is derived from one of the parts of Adamhood, i.e. removal of Satan's allotment, and from one of the parts of the spirit, (235) i.e. deeper vision. When deeper vision is sent down upon "removal of Satan's allotment from the body", this union results in excellent apparitions (*al-marāʾī*).'

And I said: 'But this would require that it say in the *ḥadīth*: "They are two parts of prophethood", because removal of Satan's allotment and deeper vision are two parts, not one part. According to this the dream would consist of two parts, not one part.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'In reality the dream hinges on removal of Satan's allotment. The spirit's part in it is subordinate and auxiliary. Whoever has had Satan's allotment removed from him by God, all his thoughts are focused on the good. When he sleeps, he sees the good which engrosses his thought, and his dream is true. Whoever hasn't had Satan's allotment removed from him, his thoughts are contrary to this, and his visions (*marāʾīhi*) aren't true.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that what the Shaykh said here—God be pleased with him—is pure unveiling and purity of divine insight (*maʿrifa*). As for the religious scholars—God be pleased with them—not one of them has enumerated these parts but they've assigned their enumeration to those who know things about the [higher] realities and characteristics of prophethood. Thus, the imam al-Ḥalīmī<sup>181</sup>—God be pleased with him—has taken it upon himself to present things which I'll cite so that you may understand how matters really stand:

Shaykh ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn al-Qūnawī<sup>182</sup> says—God be pleased with him: 'In this passage al-Ḥalīmī sets out to explain that the true dream is one of forty-six parts of prophethood and he indicates the various categories of specialized knowledge that prophets possess. He exerts himself to the extent that he brings the categories up to the above-mentioned number, and the dream is one of those categories. The

<sup>181</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 135, XXXIX; died 403/1012. It wasn't possible to consult the source.

<sup>182</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 135, XL; died 727/1327.

highest of them is 1) being addressed by God without (236) an intermediary, then 2) inspiration without words, 3) revelation through the angel's tongue, 4) the angel's breath infused into a person's interior, i.e. into his heart, 5) perfect reason, 6) perfect memory so that he remembers the full form of something if he hears it once, 7) infallibility in his *ijtihād*, 8) acumen in his comprehension in order to accommodate different forms of deduction, 9) perfection of his sight so that he sees the remotest part of earth which no one else sees, 10) perfection of his hearing so that he hears the remotest part of earth which no one else hears, 11) perfection of his smell as was the case with Jacob regarding Joseph's shirt, 12) strengthening his body so that in one night he travels a distance of thirty nights, 13) his ascension into the heavens, 14) revelation reaching him like the ringing of a bell, 15) being spoken to by sheep, 16) being addressed by plants, 17) being addressed by the tree trunk, 18) being addressed by the stone, 19) his inspiration that the howling of a wolf was an indication of nourishment for him, 20) his understanding the braying of the camel, 21) his hearing a voice without seeing a speaker, 22) his ability to see the Jinn, 23) the appearance of invisible things such as Jerusalem's appearance before him on the morning of the Night Journey,<sup>183</sup> 24) the occurrence of something by means of which he knows the final outcome, as when he said about the she-camel that knelt in Ḥudaybiya:<sup>184</sup> 'The *ḥābis al-fīl*<sup>185</sup> has held her in check', 25) his being informed by the name of something, as when he said at the arrival of Suhayl b. 'Amr: 'Your business has been made easy for you',<sup>186</sup> 26) his seeing a sign in the heavens which tells him about what will happen on earth, as when he said: 'This cloud will initiate the victory of the Banū Ka'b',<sup>187</sup> (237) 27) his ability to see behind

<sup>183</sup> Night Journey (*mi'raj*): refers to the Prophet's ascension through the heavenly spheres after which he experienced a vision of God; see Radtke, NkG, p. 28; as well as van Ess, 'Die Himmelfahrt Muḥammads', pp. 11 ff.

<sup>184</sup> Ḥudaybiya: cf. EI s.v.; the place where after negotiating with the Meccan leaders Muḥammad reached a settlement with them in 628.

<sup>185</sup> *Fath* V, pp. 675 ff.; see Lane s.v.: where *ḥābis al-fīl* is explained as 'The Restrainer of the Elephant', an epithet applied to God. When Abraha, the Abyssinian, set out to attack Mecca with his elephants, God caused the invasion to fail. Here God restrains the Prophet's camel from entering Mecca that year.

<sup>186</sup> *sahula* 'alaykum amrukum: a pun on Suhayl's names; Suhayl comes to Ḥudaybiya to negotiate with the Prophet on Mecca's behalf.

<sup>187</sup> A quotation from Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra* IV, p. 37, ll. 11 f. The Banū Ka'b play a particular role in the *Sīra*.

him, 28) his seeing something that would happen to a person after death, as when he said about Ḥanzala al-Ghasīl:<sup>188</sup> 'I saw how the angels washed him', and the latter was ritually impure before he died, 29) his revealing what indicate future victories, as happened on the day of al-Khandaq,<sup>189</sup> 30) his seeing Paradise and Hell-fire, while still in the world, 31) clairvoyance, 32) the tree's obedience to him so that it moved with its roots and branches from one place to another, 33) his being approached by the female gazelle that complained about the distress of her little young one, 34) his knowledge of interpreting dreams in which he never made a mistake, 35) his knowledge of appraisal and estimation so that something would turn out as he said, 36) guiding the people to God's ordinances, 37) guidance regarding policy in [the sphere of] religion and the world, 38) guidance regarding paths of goodness and proper conduct, 39) guidance regarding the body's health through various kinds of medicine, 40) guidance regarding the forms of pious acts, 41) guidance regarding profitable handicrafts, 42) seeing things in the invisible realm that no one before him reported, 43) seeing what will happen in the future, 44) awareness of people's secrets and hidden matters, 45) teaching the methods of deductive reasoning, 46) knowledge of polite modes of behavior in company.

Al-Ḥalīmī says: "The characteristics of lofty prophethood come to forty-six categories. Each one of these is appropriate to be associated with the true dream which the Prophet said is one of forty-six (238) parts of prophethood. Though many of these may belong to someone other than the Prophet, none the less the Prophet never makes a mistake. Others may make a mistake in this regard. But God knows best!" End of citation in summarized form.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would point out that there's an unresolved problem here because al-Ḥalīmī sets out to enumerate the parts of prophethood in general but the categories that he mentions are almost all exclusive to our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! This is the case with being addressed by the sheep, being greeted by the stone, the yearning of the tree trunk, understanding

<sup>188</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 237; *Usd* II, pp. 66 f., no. 1281.

<sup>189</sup> al-Khandaq (the trench): cf. EI s.v. This is the name given to a battle between Muḥammad and the forces of Mecca when the Meccans laid siege to Medina in 627.

the wolf, the camel and the female gazelle, and Jerusalem's appearance before him. And the same is true of his sayings:

'The *ḥābis al-fīl* has held her in check', 'Your business has been made easy for you', and 'This cloud will initiate the victory of the Banū Ka'b'.<sup>190</sup>

Then there was his knowledge of Ḥanzala's ritual impurity and what happened with regard to digging the Khandaq, as well as the tree's obedience to him and its moving from one place to another, etc. It's impossible for these matters to belong to the parts of prophethood because they're specific events. They took place once and then were done with. Moreover, as is perfectly clear, the first six categories here enumerated come under 'knowledge of languages'. His saying: (239) 'The *ḥābis al-fīl* has held her in check' and the next five categories come under 'knowledge of final outcomes'. Hence these eleven characteristics are reduced to two characteristics. Then again all forty-six characteristics, which he says are categories of knowledge, are reduced in their entirety to a single characteristic of 'apostleship' and its parts, namely 'perfect knowledge of the hidden and the visible', as has already been explained. Thus the characteristics of the Prophet have been reduced to a single characteristic of 'apostleship' and its parts.

In short, al-Ḥalīmī—God be pleased with him—did no more than take up some manifest miracles performed by the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and enumerate them as parts of prophethood in general, as found in the Prophet as well as in all other prophets—blessings and peace be upon him and upon them!

Furthermore, most of these miracles can also be thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends of God in his community—God's blessings and peace be upon him—because any miracle on the part of a prophet can be a thaumaturgic gift of a Friend—as is held to be true by the people of the Sunna and the Community—God be pleased with them! Thus it's clear that the above-mentioned miracles also occur among others besides the prophets and in no way comprise parts of prophethood. But God knows best!

And al-Ghazzālī says<sup>191</sup>—God have mercy on him: 'Let no one imagine that what passes the Prophet's lips as a judgement—God's

<sup>190</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 236.

<sup>191</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 135, XLI; died 555/1111; the passage couldn't be found in al-Ghazzālī's numerous works.

blessings and peace be upon him—happens in some random way. Rather he utters nothing but the absolute truth, as in his words:

“The true dream of an upright man is one of forty-six parts of prophethood.”

Now this is a judgement based on reality. But no one else is capable of knowing this ascription except by conjecture, because prophethood consists of that which is peculiar to a prophet and that which is alien to anyone else. And a prophet is distinguished by various kinds of exclusive characteristics:

Among them is that he knows the realities of matters connected with God and His attributes, with His angels and the House of the hereafter, as no one else knows them. Indeed, no one else possesses the abundance of known things, the increment of certainty and experienced reality, that he possesses. He has the ability to perceive the angels and to see the Celestial Realm, like the ability that distinguishes a seeing person from someone who's blind. He has the ability to grasp what will happen in the invisible realm and (240) thus to read what's on the Well-guarded Tablet, like the ability that distinguishes an intelligent person from a fool. And he has the ability to undertake miraculous acts, like someone else's ability to undertake acts of the will. These are firm attributes of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—everyone of which can be subdivided into classes such that we could divide them into forty or fifty or a greater number, just as we could divide them into forty-six parts and one part among these would be the true dream. But to do this would only amount to speculation and conjecture, and this isn't what the Prophet really wanted—God's blessings and peace be upon him!' End of citation in summarized form.

We have cited these words here so that you may know the loftiness of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and his rank with respect to science (*‘ilm*) and divine knowledge (*‘irfān*), and that ‘God bestows His bounty on whom He wishes’

And al-Māzarī<sup>192</sup> says: ‘Someone who has acquired knowledge (a religious scholar) doesn't have to know everything generally and in detail. Indeed, God the Sublime has set a limit for the knower at which he halts. This consists of things whose meaning he doesn't understand generally and in detail, whereas there are other things

<sup>192</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 135, XLII; died 536/1141; cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 240; on al-Māzarī and his relation to al-Ghazzālī see *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa*, Introduction, pp. 37 ff.

whose meaning he does understand generally and in detail. And this belongs to that category'—i.e. the *ḥadīth* concerning the forty-six parts. Ibn Baṭṭāl,<sup>193</sup> Ibn al-°Arabī<sup>194</sup> and al-Khaṭṭābī,<sup>195</sup> and others as well, hold a similar view.

Ibn Baṭṭāl, transmitting from Abū Sa°id al-Safāqūsī,<sup>196</sup> says: 'Some religious scholars maintain that (241) God the Sublime sent revelation to the Prophet in dreams for six months and then after that sent him revelation in a waking state for the rest of his life. The proportion of revelation he received in a dream is one part out of forty-six because the Prophet actually lived twenty-three years after his prophethood first began. But this is refuted in various ways:

Firstly, the duration of the revelation which occurred after revelation in dreams is disputed. It isn't agreed that it was twenty-three years.

Secondly, if the tradition involving forty-six is true, what does the proponent of this explanation say about the other traditions involving forty-five and forty-nine, and the tradition involving seventy and fifty, and so forth, as has previously been described?

Thirdly, we don't concede that the period of revelation in dreams was six months. What proof is there for this?

Fourthly, what occurred after the revelation in dreams wasn't confined to a waking state, but there was also some revelation in sleep and in true dreams. And this must be added to the six months. Thus the number of months exceeds this.

To the third point the answer is given that when revelation commenced the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was at the beginning of the fortieth year of his life, as Ibn Ishāq and others assert authoritatively, and that was in Rabī° al-Awwal. When Gabriel came down to him in the Cave of Ḥirā° it was in Ramaḍān, and there are six months between these two months. But this answer is refuted as follows. Firstly, it isn't agreed that the month was Ramaḍān. There's a group that maintains it was Rajab, and another group that maintains it was Rabī° al-Awwal. Secondly, even if one

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<sup>193</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 135, XLIII; died 449/1057; he wrote a commentary on al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

<sup>194</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 135, XLIV; this is Abū Bakr ibn al-°Arabī; died 543/1148.

<sup>195</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 240; *A°lām* II, p. 273; *GAS* I, p. 210; died 388/998.

<sup>196</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 136, XLV; nothing else is known about the author.



conceded that it was Ramaḍān, there's no mention of dreams in that month.

And to the fourth point the answer is given that what we meant by vision is consecutive vision, not simply dreams so that we must piece them together.

And to the second point, which concerns the difference in the numbers found in the traditions, the answer is given that the difference depends on the time that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—reported about it. When he'd completed thirteen years since first receiving revelation, he reported: "The dream is one of twenty-six parts." And this was at the time of the *hijra*. When he'd completed twenty years, he reported: "forty parts". And when he'd completed twenty-two years, he reported: "forty-four parts". Then at the end of his life he reported: "forty-six parts". As for reports beyond (242) these traditions, they're weak. The tradition of fifty was probably in order to round out the number, and the tradition of seventy for exaggeration. Traditions other than these haven't been confirmed. Regarding this relationship, I haven't seen a person who opposes it.'—The *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar—God have mercy on him—holds this view.

And Ibn Battāl goes on: 'However, a fundamental problem remains in this relationship, namely it's obvious in the *ḥadīth* that he wishes to extol the dream of the upright believer. But the above-mentioned relationship requires applying the report exclusively to our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—as if what it said was: "The period during which our Prophet received revelation in dreams was one of forty-six parts of the period during which he received revelation in a waking state." Yet this doesn't necessarily mean that every dream of every upright man is like that.'

The shaykh Ibn Abī Jamra rejects the above interpretation. He says:

'There's no great profit in it, and it isn't right to take words enhanced by eloquence and rhetoric in this sense. Perhaps the one saying this wished to establish some kind of relationship between prophethood and the true dream but the difference in the number of parts disturbed him.' End of quotation.

And a group of religious scholars have exerted themselves in dealing with the relationships of the above-mentioned difference.

Thus the imam Abū Jaʿfar al-Ṭabarī says: ‘The tradition that specifies seventy parts is general with regard to every true dream of every Muslim, whereas the tradition that specifies forty is exclusive to the sincere, upright believer. As for the numbers that lie between these two, they’re based on the circumstances of the believers.’

And the imam Ibn Baṭṭāl says: ‘As for the difference involving larger and smaller numbers, the most correct is what’s transmitted regarding the dream as being one of forty-six and one of seventy parts. We’ve found the dream to be divided into two kinds: the clear, obvious dream, such as when someone sees himself being given fruit in a dream and is then given the same kind of fruit in a waking state. This kind contains no strangeness and no symbol in its explanation. And there’s the concealed dream that’s not obvious. This kind of dream can only be interpreted by a skilful person because of the remoteness of its images. It’s possible that the latter dream belongs to “the seventy”, while the first one belongs to “the forty-six”, for if the parts are fewer, the dream is closer to the truth and more protected from error occurring in its interpretation—in contrast to if the parts are numerous.’

He goes on to say: ‘I presented this response to a group of people and they approved of it. One of them added to my response that (243) prophethood [also] consists of these two types. The Law-giver received it from Gabriel and reported that one time Gabriel would bring him revelation and speak with him without any difficulty. Other times he’d project sentences and phrases at him which were hard for him to understand. He’d make such an effort that he broke out in a sweat.’

Al-Māzarī says by way of summing up the matter: ‘It’s said that dreams are signs. Now when it comes to signs, some are clear and some are concealed. The one with the smallest number is clear, the one with the larger number is concealed. Whatever occurs in between is between these two.’

And the gist of what the imam Abū Muḥammad b. Abī Jamra says—God the Sublime have mercy on him—is this: ‘Prophethood has brought clear things, though sometimes it contains what’s in summary form and is only clear in certain places. Visions (*al-marāʾī*) are like this. Some of them are evident and need no interpretation, while others need interpretation. What the knower of God (*ʿārif*) grasps of the truth that emerges from visions is one of the

parts of prophethood. Sometimes the part in question is large and other times small—in accordance with his understanding. The highest of these knowers is the one whose part of prophethood is the smallest number transmitted, and the lowest of them is the one whose part is the largest number. Those apart from these two fall in between.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the gist of this is that the lowest number is connected to persons with the strongest understanding of dreams, and the highest number to those with the weakest understanding. Numbers in the middle are connected with persons in the middle. But there’s a problem here. In this case the difference in the numbers depends on the understanding of the interpreter who isn’t the one who had the dream. If this were right, the wording of the *ḥadīth* should be: ‘Understanding the true dream of an upright man is one of the forty-six parts of prophethood.’ The virtue wouldn’t be in the dream but in understanding the dream. This, however, is contrary to the intention of the *ḥadīth*. But God knows best!

.....

And I asked al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about the dream which comes from God and the dream which comes from Satan.

(244) He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘There are some bodies (*dhawāt*) that dwell in the truth and are attached to truth, and there are others that dwell in falsehood and are attached to falsehood. Each one is provided with what suits it and what sustains its state.’ Then he presented a similitude based on two beggars. ‘Each one of them asks for ten dinars. They’re given the dinars and are greatly pleased. But in the one case the beggar is delighted and pleased with the giver of the gift such that his interior glows with delight and his innermost secret rejoices. And this becomes his customary practice day and night. He’s the one who dwells in the truth and is attached to it. The second beggar is delighted with the dinars because he can pay for his necessities with them. If he comes across them, his thoughts turn to the necessities he can pay for with the money. Once he’s taken care of his necessities and has attained his purpose with them, he returns to begging and says: “Oh Lord, give me another ten dinars!” His heart is blighted by his necessities and his concern is for these. When he says: “Oh Lord, give me...”, this entails no more than

the name [of the Lord] passing his lips, while his heart is devoid of its meaning because of his being submerged in remoteness from God and veils. He's the one who dwells in falsehood and is attached to it.

Now the dreams of the first person come from God because of his attachment to God, whereas the dreams of the second person come from Satan because of his attachment to Satan. Everything comes from God—He is mighty and glorious—but the second kind of dream is attributed to Satan because Satan likes it and is pleased that the offspring of Adam experience it. The second dream arises from the darkness that Satan loves with a love such as the branch feels for its root, since Satan's root is darkness.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that the authorities on *ḥadīth* such as Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn al-ʿArabi, Ibn Baṭṭāl and Ibn Abī Jamra, as well as others, say that all dreams come from God—He is mighty and glorious—and [certain ones] are attributed to Satan because he's pleased with them.

.....

And I asked al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about the true dream and the false dream.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The true dream occurs when the heart of the dreamer, during sleep, sees and beholds the truth, just as this can occur in a waking state.

With the false dream it's the reverse. Such a dream occurs when the heart of the dreamer, during sleep, is as common people say, i.e. his heart moves about from one fantasy to another and is veiled from seeing the truth during sleep, just as it's veiled from seeing it in a waking state.'

And I said: 'The dream of certain people of darkness may be true and the heart of such a dreamer isn't veiled. (245) But previously it was said that the dream of the people of darkness comes from Satan and whatever comes from Satan necessarily brings with it veils. Yet the king beheld a dream which God has recounted in His noble Book where He says:

"And the king said: 'I saw [in a dream] seven fat cows' (12/43)."

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This was so because the dream contained a secret and a truth for Joseph—peace be upon him—and it was the cause of his renown, his release from prison and his becoming the ruler [of Egypt]. Thus the dream of an infidel can come true if some matter that concerns another person is attached to

it. The effect of the dream in question was of concern to everyone who lived at the same time as the king. So this was a dream about someone else and not especially about himself.'

Then I asked: 'But the dreams that Joseph's two companions in prison had concerned both of them in particular and both dreams turned out to be true. In this case how did it affect anyone else?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This was so because it contained a truth for Joseph—peace be upon him—and it was the cause of his renown, his release from prison and his becoming the ruler.

In short, dreams of the people of darkness are only true if they contain truth for someone else, or if they contain testimony on behalf of the soundness of the true religion which isn't the religion of the dreamer himself, or if they're the cause of his conversion, or for other such reasons.'

I, al-Lama'i, would note that this is similar to what's in the *Fath al-bārī*. The ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in the chapter that deals with the dreams of those engaged in bawdiness,<sup>197</sup> iniquity and polytheism:

'The experts on dream interpretation say that if a traitor or a profligate beholds a true dream, it may be glad tidings for him indicating that he'll be led to the faith, for example, or to repentance, or it may be a warning not to continue in unbelief and wickedness. It may also be on behalf of someone else who's reckoned among the people of virtue. And the dreamer may see what indicates approval [of God] regarding what he's engaged in, which is a form of affliction, delusion and deceit—we take refuge with God from such an eventuality!'<sup>198</sup>

I would add that if he dreams something that indicates [God's] approval of his unbelief, it isn't a sound dream since a sound dream is a true dream or something even more special than that, as Ibn Ḥajar states above. But perhaps [on the last point] he has in mind whatever (246) the infidel dreams in general, not just what he dreams that's true.

.....

And I asked al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about a dream that brings harm and a dream that doesn't bring harm even if it's distressing. In this connection I told him the story of the woman

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<sup>197</sup> The *Fath* has *sujūn*.

<sup>198</sup> *Fath* XIV, p. 408.

who dreamt that the pillar of her house collapsed and that she gave birth to a child who was blind in one eye. At the time of the dream her husband was away on business. She recounted the dream to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and he replied—blessings and peace be upon him:

‘Your husband will return safely—if God so wills—and you’ll give birth to an upright child.’<sup>199</sup>

Then the woman came back a second time but the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—wasn’t there. She recounted her dream to °Ā’isha<sup>200</sup> and °Ā’isha told her: ‘If your dream is true, your absent husband is going to die and you’ll give birth to a profligate child.’ When the Prophet came home—blessings and peace be upon him—and °Ā’isha told him about the dream and her interpretation, he was very displeased by this. He said:

‘Hold on, °Ā’isha! If you interpret a dream for a Muslim, interpret it with a good outcome. For a dream will turn out according to how it’s interpreted.’

The *hāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar<sup>201</sup> says: ‘Al-Dārimī<sup>202</sup> transmits this with a good chain of transmission from Sulaymān b. Yasār<sup>203</sup> who heard it from °Ā’isha—God be pleased with them both!’

(247) Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The distressing dream is a warning from God to the bondsman and a test as to whether he’ll abide with his Lord or be cut off from Him. If the bondsman is attached to God the Sublime and has a distressing dream, he pays no attention to it and accords it no importance. He knows he’s associated with the One in Whose hands all affairs rest and Who disposes over them, and that whatever God the Sublime chooses has been previously determined by the divine will. Therefore the matter of the dream doesn’t alarm him and he accords it no significance. This is a dream which, with God’s permission, will cause him no harm. If the bondsman isn’t attached to his Lord and he beholds a distressing dream, he sets it before his sight, fills his interior with it, and preoccupies his innermost secret with it. Through this dream he becomes cut off from his Lord. In his

199 *Concordance* II, p. 359.

200 Reputed to be the Prophet’s favorite wife.

201 Not found in the *Fatḥ*.

202 GAS I, pp. 114 f.; died 255/869.

203 *Wāfi* XV, p. 443, no. 593; died *circa* 107/725.

judgement the dream will afflict him without any doubt. The matter of the dream causes him to forget about what has previously been determined. "Whatever someone fears is inflicted on him." This is a person the dream will harm.'

Then I asked: 'And why is the person who had the dream ordered to seek refuge with God from its evil and the evil of Satan, and to spit three times on his left?'<sup>204</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Verily, the hearts of the believers sleep in God and are awake in God. If they sleep, their Lord is in their hearts while they sleep. And if they wake up, God the Sublime is in their hearts while they're awake. Thus, if one of them had a dream that distressed him, when he woke his heart would be shaken out of the state he'd been in when he went to sleep, and the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—would order him to return to his earlier state. What he meant was that the bondsman return to God the Sublime and place God between himself and the distressing dream. This is the meaning of seeking refuge with God. Thus he attaches himself to God the Sublime and separates himself from the distressing dream. Since Satan doesn't like the bondsman's returning to God, the bondsman is ordered to seek refuge with God from Satan, so as to place God the Sublime between himself and the cursed one. In this way he separates himself from Satan and attaches himself to the True—He is exalted! And he's ordered to spit by way of declaring impure the state from which he returns because of the separation it entails from God the Sublime. Thus he spits three times on his left, declaring that state to be impure.'

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'He's ordered to spit on his left because the left is the direction Satan comes from.'

And he added—God be pleased with him: 'All good things come from the right. The guardian recording angel who's strong in (248) light is on the right, while the angel who's weak in light is on the left. Paradise is on the right and Hell is on the left. Gabriel—peace be upon him—only ever came to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—from the right, and the spirits of the martyrs were only seen by the Prophet on the right, because after their death at Badr, Uhud<sup>205</sup> and elsewhere, the Prophet—blessings and peace

<sup>204</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 247; *Concordance* I, p. 186.

<sup>205</sup> Badr and Uhud: two famous battles Muḥammad fought against the Meccans from his base in Medina; cf. EI s.v.

be upon him—missed them. He looked on his right and saw them as mounted horsemen engaged in holy war. And the Celestial Throne is on the right, while the earth is on the left. The earth that contains the believers from among Adam's offspring is on the right, while the part containing the Jinn is on the left. Moreover, the veins which are on the right side are abundant in their praise of God, in contrast to the veins on the left side which are deaf and dumb. And the light of the True comes from the right, while falsehood comes from the left. In short, everything that's good is from the right, and everything that's bad is from the left.'

Then I asked: 'What's meant by the right?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'As for someone endowed with illumination, he sees everything good on his right, and he sees everything bad on his left. The matter then changes if he changes position. Thus if we imagine him facing toward the east, he'd observe everything good on his right, which faces the south, and see Paradise, the Celestial Throne and the spirits of the martyrs. On his left, which faces the north, he'd see Hell, satans and the damned spirits, and other such forms of darkness. But were he to change position and turn toward the west so that his right faced the north and his left the south, then on his right he'd see all the above-mentioned good things and others as well. On his left, which would face the south, he'd see all the above-mentioned kinds of evil and others as well. And it would be the same if he turned to face in a different direction. The situation would change accordingly.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The secret behind this is that the knower of God possesses two eyeglasses which he sees with. One pair is luminous and with them he only sees light and what resembles light. The other is laden with darkness. With them he only sees darkness and what resembles darkness.'

The luminous eyeglasses are on his right and they're his faith in God—He is mighty and glorious! The glasses laden with darkness are on his left and they're the wicked lusts of the carnal soul (*nafs*) and their wickedness is in relation to the light of faith. If he looks to his right, he sees by means of the light of his faith and he sees all truth and light that resembles it. (249) If he looks to his left, his sight is by means of the darkness of the carnal soul's lusts and he sees all the darkness and falsehood that resembles it, for his sight is based on the nature of his body. Within him there's spirit (*rūh*) and body



(*dhāt*). When the spirit settled into his body in love, contentment and acceptance along with faith, a light established itself in both of them, the light of his faith, and it mingled with his body and they became one. Reason is the spectator and if it sees with the glasses of the spirit's light, it sees good things. If it sees with the glasses of the light in the body, it sees darkness and whatever resembles darkness.'<sup>206</sup> °Abd al-°Azīz [al-Dabbāgh] said this.

And this is the sense of the *ḥadīth* of the persons (*al-aswida*)<sup>206</sup> who were on the right of Adam—peace be upon him—and when he looked at them, he laughed, whereas when he looked at the persons who were on his left—peace be upon him—he wept. The first persons were the souls of the blessed, and the others were the souls of the damned.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for spitting three times, the first time is for the body, the second for the spirit, and the third is the bondsman's seeking help from God—He is sublime! And this is the secret behind spitting three times. The command that the bondsman change the side he was lying on when he wakes up is so that the effect of the first sleep is annulled. He then becomes like someone who begins another sleep and who recollects God the Sublime during it, whereas if he doesn't change position, he's like someone who remains in his first sleep.'

As for the command to perform ritual prayer, al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—did command this once.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this occurs in the *Ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>207</sup> of Muslim, but the Prophet didn't mention it again. On the other hand, in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī<sup>208</sup> if a person wishes he may perform ritual prayer or if he wishes he may remain in the state he's in. The secret behind the ritual prayer is to eradicate the darkness that entered his body because of the distressing dream. By means of prayer he extracts the darkness and purges it from his body.

The following are the rules concerning a distressing dream: 1) one seeks refuge with God against its evil, 2) one seeks refuge against

<sup>206</sup> *al-aswida*: not found in *Concordance* but in al-Bukhārī; cf. *Faṭḥ* II, p. 5 (*Kitāb al-ṣalāt*, *ḥadīth* no. 349) and p. 7; and see Hava's *Dictionary: sawād*, pl. *aswida*=person.

<sup>207</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ* VIII, p. 232.

<sup>208</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 136, XLVI; died 256/870; *Faṭḥ* II, pp. 67 ff.

the evil of Satan, 3) one spits three times to the left, 4) one changes the side one was sleeping on at the time of seeing the distressing dream, and 5) one performs ritual prayer. The first four of these are indispensable. As for the fifth, it depends on the choice of the sleeper.

(250) This is because the first four have been handed down in all the reports, whereas the fifth has only been handed down once.

And there are still two other rules which the religious scholars mention:

The first is the recitation of the verse of the Throne. Ibn Ḥajar says: 'Some religious scholars mention it but I haven't come across a chain of transmission for it.'<sup>209</sup> The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'That's how matters stand, for the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—didn't order the recitation of this verse.'

The second is that one shouldn't mention the dream to anyone. This occurs in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.<sup>210</sup> The *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar says—God have mercy on him: 'An authentic tradition has come down with regard to seeking protection from the evil of a dream. It's been published by Sa'id b. Manṣūr,<sup>211</sup> Ibn Abī Shayba<sup>212</sup> and 'Abd al-Razzāq<sup>213</sup> with sound chains of transmission going back to Ibrāhīm al-Nakha'ī<sup>214</sup> who said:

"If while asleep one of you sees something that displeases him, let him say when he wakes up: 'I take refuge in what the angels of God and His apostles took refuge in against the evil of this dream of mine, lest what I dislike in it afflict me in my religion and my worldly concerns.'"<sup>215</sup>

With regard to seeking refuge from a terrifying dream, there's what Mālik<sup>216</sup> transmits. He says: (251) "I was informed that Khālīd b. al-Walīd<sup>217</sup>—God be pleased with him—was frightened while he slept, and he said: 'Oh Apostle of God, I was frightened in my sleep.' The Prophet replied—God's blessings and peace be upon

<sup>209</sup> *Faṭḥ* XIV, p. 396.

<sup>210</sup> *Faṭḥ* XIV, p. 394, no. 6985.

<sup>211</sup> *Wāfi* XV, p. 263, no. 370.

<sup>212</sup> GAS I, pp. 108 f.; died 235/849.

<sup>213</sup> GAS I, p. 99; died 211/827.

<sup>214</sup> GAS I, pp. 403 f.; died 96/715.

<sup>215</sup> *Faṭḥ* XIV, p. 397, ll. 10-13.

<sup>216</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 136, XLVII; died 179/795; *Muwaffa'* II, p. 950.

<sup>217</sup> Cf. EI s.n.

him: 'Say: "I take refuge in God's perfect words from the wrath of God and His punishment, from the evil of His bondsmen and the temptations of the satans, and I take refuge with You, my Lord, lest they enter my presence."'"

Al-Nasā'ī<sup>218</sup> has also published it as a report from °Amr b. Shu°ayb<sup>219</sup>—going back to his father—and to his grandfather. °Amr said: "Khālīd b. al-Walīd—God be pleased with him—was frightened while asleep." The rest is similar to the above tradition, though at the beginning he adds:

"When you go to bed, say: 'In the name of God, I seek refuge with God.'" And he then repeats the rest. The original form is in Abū (252) Dāwūd<sup>220</sup> and al-Tirmidhī. Al-Ḥākim judged the *ḥadīth* to be *ḥasan* and *ṣaḥīḥ*.<sup>221</sup> But God the Sublime knows best!

.....

And I asked al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about the dream Abū Bakr interpreted in the presence of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and about which the Prophet said to him: 'In part you're right and in part you're wrong.'

Al-Bukhārī presents the story in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*<sup>222</sup> where he says: 'Yaḥyā b. Bukayr<sup>223</sup> reported to us—from al-Layth<sup>224</sup>—from Yūnus<sup>225</sup>—from Ibn Shihāb<sup>226</sup>—from °Ubayd Allāh b. °Ubayd Allāh b. °Utba,<sup>227</sup> that Ibn °Abbās reported:

"A man came to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and said: 'While asleep at night I saw a cloud (*ẓulla*) from which clarified butter and honey was dripping. I saw people gathering it up, some of them more, others less. And behold there was a rope extending from the earth to the sky, and I saw you take hold of it and ascend. Then another man took hold of it and ascended by means of it. Then still another man took hold of it and ascended by means of it. Then another man took hold of it and it broke, but it

<sup>218</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 136, XLVIII; died 302/915; not found in al-Nasā'ī according to *Concordance*.

<sup>219</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 251.

<sup>220</sup> *Sunan Abī Dāwūd* III, pp. 11 f., no. 3893.; 'Ibrīziana', p. 138, LX.

<sup>221</sup> Quoted from *Faṭḥ* XIV, p. 397.

<sup>222</sup> See *Faṭḥ* XIV, pp. 471 ff., no. 7046.

<sup>223</sup> GAS I, p. 434.

<sup>224</sup> Probably GAS I, p. 520; died 175/791.

<sup>225</sup> Probably GAS I, p. 519; died 159/775.

<sup>226</sup> GAS I, p. 280; died 124/742=Muḥammad b. Muslim al-Zuhri.

<sup>227</sup> TT VII, p. 23, no. 50; died *circa* 99/717.

was then joined together again (*thumma wuṣila*). At that Abū Bakr said: (253) ‘Oh Apostle of God, by your father and mother and by God, let me interpret this dream!’ The Prophet replied—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘Interpret it!’ Abū Bakr said: ‘The cloud is Islam. As for the honey and the clarified butter dripping from it, the Qurʾān possesses sweetness that drips from it. Some take more of it, others less. As for the rope extending from the earth to the sky, it’s the truth you possess. You take hold of it and God causes you to ascend. Then a man takes hold of it after you and he ascends by means of it. Then another man takes hold of it and he ascends by means of it. Then still another man takes hold of it but with him the rope breaks. Then it was joined again for him (*thumma wuṣila lahū*), and he ascends by means of it. Now tell me, oh Apostle of God, by your father and your mother, did I interpret it rightly or wrongly?’ And the Prophet replied—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘In part you’re right and in part you’re wrong.’ Abū Bakr said: ‘By God, oh Apostle of God, tell me where I was wrong!’ The Prophet replied: ‘Don’t swear oaths!’”

The word *zulla*, i.e. *zāʾ* with *u*, means a cloud that casts shade.<sup>228</sup> The word *tanṭifu*, i.e. *tāʾ* with *i* (though *u* is also possible) means ‘it drips’. For the words: *wa-idhā sababun wāṣilun min al-arḍ ilāʾl-samāʾ*, Ibn Wahb<sup>229</sup> in his report gives: *wa-arā sababan wāṣilan min al-arḍ ilāʾl-samāʾ*. *Sabab* is a rope. And for the word *uʿbur*, Ibn ʿUyayna<sup>230</sup> in his report gives: *ʿabbirhā*, i.e. with a *tashdīd* on the *bāʾ*. For the words: *ammāʾl-zulla faʾl-islām*, *wa-ammāʾlladhī yanṭif min al-ʿasal waʾl-samn*, Sulaymān b. Kathīr<sup>231</sup> in his report gives: *wa-ammāʾl-ʿasal waʾl-samn faʾl-Qurʾān fī ḥalāwat al-ʿasal wa-lin al-laban*. And for the words: *lā tuqsim*, Ibn Māja<sup>232</sup> in his report gives: *lā tuqsim yā Abā Bakr*.

The religious scholars—God be pleased with them—disagree about what the error was that Abū Bakr committed—God be pleased with him! Al-Muhallab<sup>233</sup> and those who follow him say: ‘His error is in his words: *thumma wuṣila lahū* (then it was joined again for

<sup>228</sup> From this sentence onward, the lengthy text, in shortened and adapted form, is taken from *Fath* XIV, pp. 474 ff.

<sup>229</sup> Probably Wahb b. Wahb al-Bakhtārī; died 200/815; GAS I, p. 267.

<sup>230</sup> Sufyān b. ʿUyayna: GAS I, p. 96; died 196/811.

<sup>231</sup> *Wāfi* XV, p. 421, no. 570.

<sup>232</sup> GAS I, p. 147; died 273/886.

<sup>233</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 253; Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* XIII, pp. 31 f.; died 435/1044.

him), because in the *ḥadīth* it says *thumma wuṣila* without *lahū* (for him). Abū Bakr should have halted where the dream halts and not have mentioned the one for whom the rope was joined—the meaning being that the rope broke with °Uthmān and then was joined again for someone else, i.e. the caliphate was transferred to someone else.’ And °Iyād<sup>234</sup> states: ‘It’s said that the error is in his words: *wuṣila lahū*, for the report only has *wuṣila* without *lahū*, and thus [Abū Bakr implies] it wasn’t joined for °Uthmān but it was joined for °Alī, i.e. the caliphate was transferred to °Alī. But this is refuted by the fact (254) that though the word *lahū* has dropped out of al-Layth’s<sup>235</sup> report in al-Aṣīlī<sup>236</sup> and Karīma,<sup>237</sup> it occurs in Abū Dharr<sup>238</sup> as transmitted from his three shaykhs and it’s this way in al-Nasā’ī’s<sup>239</sup> report. Moreover, it occurs in the report of Ibn Wahb<sup>240</sup> and others transmitted from Yūnus<sup>241</sup> in Muslim and others, and in Ma°mar’s<sup>242</sup> report in al-Tirmidhī and in the report of Sulaymān<sup>243</sup> transmitted from Ibn °Uyayna<sup>244</sup> in al-Nasā’ī<sup>245</sup> and Ibn Māja.<sup>246</sup> Likewise, it’s in the report of Ibn Ḥusayn<sup>247</sup> in Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] and in the report of Sulaymān b. Kathīr in al-Dārimī and Abū °Awāna<sup>248</sup>—all of them transmitting from al-Zuhri.<sup>249</sup> And Sulaymān b. Kathīr adds in his report: *fa-wuṣila lahū fa’ttaṣala*, and so the word *lahū* was in the *ḥadīth*. And in that case the meaning is that °Uthmān was almost cut off from being one of the Companions because of the affairs he was involved in which they disapproved of. But then he was martyred: *fa-wuṣila*, and he was joined with them (*fa’ttaṣala*).’

234 Cf. EI, s.n. °Iyād b. Mūsā; ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 138 LX; not found in the *Shifā’*.

235 See ftn. 224 above.

236 Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 254; °A°lām IV, p. 63; died 392/1002.

237 Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 254.; he refers to °A°lām al-nisā’.

238 GAS I, p. 231, no. 333; died 435/1044.

239 Read al-Nasā’ī instead of al-Nasafī; but not found in al-Nasā’ī.

240 See ftn. 229 above.

241 See ftn. 225 above.

242 Probably Ma°mar b. Rāshid; GAS I, p. 290; died 154/714.

243 I.e. Sulaymān b. Kathīr; see ftn. 231 above.

244 I.e. Sufyān b. °Uyayna; see ftn. 230 above.

245 See ftn. 218 above.

246 See ftn. 232 above.

247 Unidentified.

248 See p. 146, ftn. 104; GAS I, p. 174; no. 149.

249 See ftn. 226 above.

However, Qutayba b. Sa<sup>c</sup>īd,<sup>250</sup> Abū Muḥammad b. Abī Zayd,<sup>251</sup> Abū Muḥammad al-Aṣīlī,<sup>252</sup> Abū Bakr al-Ismā<sup>c</sup>īlī,<sup>253</sup> and Aḥmad b. Naṣr al-Dāwūdī,<sup>254</sup> as well as others, are of the view that the error was his precipitation to interpret the dream—God be pleased with him—before the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—ordered him to do so. That is to say: ‘You’re right in your interpretation but wrong in your precipitation.’ This is refuted by the fact that Abu Bakr—God be pleased with him—sought permission from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—to interpret the dream, and the Prophet gave him permission to do so. Moreover, this view is contrary to what’s obvious in the words: ‘In part you’re right (255) and in part you’re wrong.’ It’s obvious from this that he was partly right in his interpretation and partly wrong in his interpretation.

Al-Ṭaḥāwī,<sup>255</sup> al-Khaṭṭābī,<sup>256</sup> Abū Bakr b. al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī<sup>257</sup> and Ibn al-Jawzī,<sup>258</sup> as well as others, are of the view that the error is to do with his interpreting ‘the clarified butter and the honey’ as the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān. He interpreted both of these as one thing when he should have interpreted them as two things, as in the case of the *ḥadīth* of <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh b. <sup>c</sup>Amr b. al-<sup>c</sup>Āṣ which Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] has published.<sup>259</sup> <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh says:

‘I saw in a dream as if there was clarified butter on one of my fingers and honey on the other, and I was licking both fingers. When I woke up in the morning, I mentioned this to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and he said: “You will read the two books, the Torah and the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ān.” And after that he did read the two books.’

In this *ḥadīth* the clarified butter and the honey are explained as two [separate] things. And thus in our *ḥadīth* they should be

250 On him see ThG II, p. 544.

251 GAS I, p. 478 f.; died 386/996.

252 See fn. 236 above.

253 Probably *Ansāb* I, p. 158, no. 406; GAS I, p. 202; no. 232; died 371/981.

254 GAS I, p. 482; died 402/1011.

255 Cf. editor’s fn., I, p. 255; GAS I, pp. 439 ff.; died 321/933.

256 See fn. 195 above.

257 See fn. 194 above.

258 See p. 188, fn. 185.

259 *Musnad* II, p. 222.

interpreted as the Book and the Sunna, or as learning and action, or memorizing and comprehension, or as something else.

Others say that the error is in explaining *al-zūlla* as Islam and that it should be explained as the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—while the clarified butter and the honey should be explained as the Book and the Sunna.

And others say that the error is in the form of an omission: 'You've omitted something and haven't interpreted it', i.e. by not designating the three men [who followed] after the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! That's why the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't respond to Abū Bakr's oath, because responding to an oath is called for if no wickedness and manifest hardship results from it. (256) But if such a result will occur, no response should be given. And perhaps the wickedness here was what he knew would result from the rope breaking with ʿUthmān, which led to ʿUthmān's death and the outbreak of the flames of those wars and discords. And he was loath to speak of this, fearing that it would spread among the people. Likewise, if he responded to his oath, he'd have to specify who the men were. If he did designate who they were, there would then have been an authoritative text concerning their caliphate. But God the Sublime's pre-eternal will had already determined that their caliphate would be as it was. Thus he omitted designating who they were, fearing that this would bring about wickedness.—All of this is what Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Nawawī<sup>260</sup> says—God have mercy on him!

Another group hold the view that one should refrain from entering into this question out of reverence for Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him! Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī<sup>261</sup>—God have mercy on him—says: 'I asked one of the shaykhs versed in the interpretation of dreams what the error of Abū Bakr was. He replied: "Who will know this? If it was an error for Abū Bakr to step ahead of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—by giving an interpretation, stepping ahead of Abū Bakr by designating his error is an even greater error. Prudence and religion require one to abstain from this."<sup>262</sup>

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<sup>260</sup> See p. 187, fn. 180

<sup>261</sup> Not found in his works.

<sup>262</sup> Up to here quoted from the *Faḥḥ* in shortened form; see fn. 228 above.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The cloud (*al-zulla*) is Islam. The honey and clarified butter dripping from it are the accepted works of God’s bondsmen in general, not just the recitation of the Qur’ān but this includes all forms of acts of obedience accepted [by God]: ritual prayer, fasting, the pilgrimage to Mecca, obligatory and voluntary alms-giving, the manumission of slaves, consecrating property for pious purposes (*hubs*), looking after the needs of the believers, participating in the funeral procession, ransoming prisoners, and other visible works involving the movement of bodies. These visible works ascend to Barzakh, and the spirits that are in Barzakh observe them and say: “This is a virtuous deed of So-and-so, the son of So-and-so, who will join us on such-and-such a day.” Moreover, his father, his grandfather, and his great-grandfather, for example, observe his pious work. With regard to observing these works, it makes no difference whether the spirits have already descended to earth and then returned to Barzakh, or whether they haven’t yet descended to earth. Even if a small boy were to receive illumination, he’d inform the people of their pious works and say: “Oh So-and-so, your action such-and-such reached us when we were in Barzakh on such-and-such a day. And oh So-and-so, your action accepted [by God] reached us before this or after it.” But God the Sublime has chosen to conceal this and has caused the spirits to forget it once they’ve entered [physical] shapes.

Furthermore, these works are of two kinds:

(257) There are works which are exclusively for the sake of God—He is sublime—and outwardly human beings derive no benefit from them. These include things like prostration before God and bowing to Him, worshipping Him through ritual prayer and fasting, fear of Him and hope in Him, and other such acts of obedience which occur between the bondsman and his Master—He is sublime!

And there are those which bring benefit to God’s bondsmen, such as the manumission of slaves, voluntary alms-giving, consecrating property for pious purposes, ransoming prisoners, looking after people’s needs, and all the other pious actions which bring a benefit to human beings.

God’s reward to His bondsman for the first kind [of good action] is to provide the bondsman with a light from Himself which increases his faith and strengthens his divine knowledge (*‘irfān*). Doubts are eradicated from his heart and his misgivings disappear. In this world



his faith becomes purified and in the world to come his vision [of God] is magnified. Thus the reward for this kind of action is pure light and strength in faith.

As for the second kind of action, its reward consists in the welfare of the body. This takes the form of increasing someone's sustenance and warding off calamities that might strike. The body obtains immense benefit because it takes delight in the fact that calamities are warded off and prevented, and in the arrival of greater sustenance. And thanks to this the body undergoes the utmost growth. This occurs in the present world.

As for the world to come, there voluntary alms by which he brought benefit to God's bondsmen turn into blessings for him, blessings of the kind he likes and desires: stuffing<sup>263</sup> or cake or edible fowl or wives to cohabit with, etc., which carnal souls desire and the sight takes pleasure in.

What emerges from this is that the reward for the first kind of action benefits the faith, and the reward for the second kind benefits the welfare of the body. And the honey mentioned in the dream indicates the first kind of action, just as the clarified butter mentioned in it indicates the second kind. The reason for this is that honey attracts strength to the body and suppresses damage which hinders strength but it doesn't cause the body to flourish, nor to produce flesh. Thus it resembles the first kind of action which attracts strength of faith to the body without sustenance and repels doubts and uncertainties from the body. It renders the light of faith pure. In this way honey strengthens the body, cleanses it of feebleness and purges it of weakness and indolence. As for the clarified butter, it causes the body to flourish and to produce flesh, makes it fat and causes it to grow. But the body doesn't acquire strength from it like the strength it acquires from honey. Thus the clarified butter resembles the second kind of works which yield sustenance and ward off (258) external calamities from bodies. So these two kinds of works are intended by the honey and the clarified butter in this dream. And the honey imparts strength, while the clarified butter imparts growth. The first kind of action strengthens the faith and the second kind increases one's sustenance. The honey resembles the first kind of action, the clarified butter the second.'

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<sup>263</sup> Precise meaning uncertain.

I asked: 'Which of the two kinds is better and preferable?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Which do you think is better for you, to be thin like grass and contain within you the strength of forty men, or to be fat and unable to walk and devoid of strength?'

I replied: 'It's better for me to be thin and to possess the strength of forty men.'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'The same analogy applies to the works that increase the lights of faith and those that increase one's sustenance.'

Then I said: 'These visible works which divide into two kinds ascend from the earth to the sky, whereas the honey and clarified butter in the dream come down rather than go up. So how is it acceptable to explain them as the above-mentioned works, given their difference with regard to descending and ascending?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Ascending and descending are relative. What for us may be ascending is descending for someone else. Perhaps the spirit of the one dreaming was in the sky in such a way as to be facing us and not in such a way as to be facing the second sky (celestial sphere). Doubtlessly the people whose direction is facing us have their heads toward us, while their feet face in the other direction. Since their heads face toward us, they see what ascends from the earth into the sky as if it's descending on them. Likewise, the purpose of a dream is that the dreamer understands it and perceives it clearly, but if the cloud (*al-zulla*) had been placed on earth above our heads, whatever ascended from it would have been veiled from the dreamer's sight. For this reason the ascending was made into descending. And the ascending also requires explanation and interpretation. It isn't to be taken in a literal sense.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The rope extending from the sky to the earth is perfect faith, but not all perfect faith is meant by it. Rather it's the perfect faith of rulers (*al-umarā'*) who impose in full the stipulations of the *sharī'a* on themselves and on their subjects. For that rope is attached to the cloud and is the cause of its raining down clarified butter and honey so that it descended on the people and they collected it, (259) some of them more, others less. But perfect faith won't cause their works to be accepted, their acts of obedience to be abundant, and the appearance of good deeds among them which ascend and are accepted. The one endowed with perfect

faith must take hold of the hands of the believers, help the weak and hold back the powerful from them, and impose in full the stipulations of the *sharīʿa*. Then good deeds among God's bondsmen will be abundant and their sins will be few. They won't commit fornication, they won't steal, they won't kill someone unjustly—which God has forbidden.

In such a case all members of the Muslim community will be good and virtuous, and the ruler (*al-amīr*) will be someone who makes firm the pillar of Islam for the people and lets its benefits and blessings rain down on them. This situation had reached perfection at the time of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

He went on—God be pleased with him: 'As for the three rulers (*al-umarāʾ*) mentioned in the dream, the Friends and knowers of God disagree about them.

One group of the Friends of God who are called the Ṣiddīqī group and are followers of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him—my own shaykhs belong to this group—believe that the rulers meant are the three caliphs, Abū Bakr, ʿUmar and ʿUthmān—God be pleased with them! And the break involving ʿUthmān refers to what he was reproached for. The rope being joined together again refers to his death as a martyr—God be pleased with him!

Another group of the Friends of God who are called the Ḥasanī group and are followers of al-Ḥasan b. ʿAlī—God be pleased with them both—believe that the rulers in question are nobles (*ashrāf*) from among the descendants of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and from the house of prophethood and apostleship. Islamic opinion agreed on two of them and then agreed on the third one. Then they split up but then they came together again in agreement. This is the meaning of the break and the joining together again.'

And he said: 'The meaning of the dream is what this group believes. Indeed, the rank of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was lofty such that only another prophet or the son of a prophet could fill his place and ascend by his ladder. Since the rope was one and the three rulers ascend by it just as the Prophet did—God's blessings and peace be upon him—this shows that there was an affinity between him and the three rulers. Now it's known that no one was similar to the Prophet with respect to his perfect faith—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The only other affinity that

remained was that of kinship with him and this was the case with the above-mentioned noble rulers. Nobody could take the place of the unique one [the Prophet] and enter his house except he himself or his son. Moreover, the person who had the dream was one of the Prophet's Companions and he knew Abū Bakr, °Umar and °Uthmān. If the latter men were meant in the dream, he'd have known them. After having said: "Then I saw that you, oh Apostle of God, took hold of the rope and ascended", he'd have said: "...and I saw that Abū Bakr took hold of it and ascended, and then I saw that °Umar took hold of it and ascended, and then I saw (260) °Uthmān." But since he didn't do so but said instead in each case: "I saw a man...", it shows that he saw men he didn't know, and they weren't the three caliphs in question.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I discussed this many times with the Shaykh and disputed it with him on numerous occasions.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The truth is what I'm telling you, namely that they were nobles (*ashrāf*) and not the three caliphs.' Then he referred me to the two proofs mentioned above and he said to me: 'I belong to the Ṣiddīqī group but the truth must be made known!'

Then I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'How is it that the interpretation of the dream was concealed from Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him—and someone else knew it? For though we know that God bestows His favor on whomever He wishes, we believe that Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him—was the chief of the knowers of God after the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the leader of the Friends of God among the Prophet's Companions and everyone else as well. We've often heard you say: "There's no one in the Prophet's community—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who's a match for Abū Bakr in divine knowledge (*irfān*) and no one among the Friends of God and the godly in the Muslim community who's familiar with the Prophet's interior—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the way Abū Bakr is. He's the chief of the knowers of God and the leader of those who love God.'"

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Abū Bakr knew about the matter of this interpretation—God be pleased with him—and he knew what's even greater by ten thousand degrees. But it eluded him on that occasion because of the Prophet's presence—God's blessings

and peace be upon him! Indeed, other people's lights of knowledge disappear when the Prophet is present—blessings and peace be upon him—and they no longer flare up because they're transformed into the light of love. Love then stirs the fire of longing. Thought becomes preoccupied with this and the interior is submerged in it. There's no doubt that if the lights of knowledge disappear and the lights of love and longing flare up, the one speaking becomes absent-minded with regard to knowledge and like someone whose spirit has been deeply affected, because the heart only has one direction. If it turns its attention to something, it's cut off from everything else. The goal and the chief of the knowers of God is Abū Bakr, and the locus of their hope is the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! So if the Prophet is before them, they don't pay attention to knowledge or to anything else, because knowledge is from the lights of his person (*dhāt*)—blessings and peace be upon him—and if the person isn't present, they attach themselves to its lights, for the lights connect them to the person. But if the person is present, intermediaries are dropped and attention must be given to it. And hearts turn toward their goal.'

(261) I asked: 'By what means do they turn toward the person?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'By means of three things: love, veneration and amazement at what God has bestowed on them—He is blessed and exalted! For if the [Egyptian] women exclaimed about Joseph—peace be upon him: "God save us! This is no human being. This can only be a noble angel!" (12/31), what are the knowers of God to say about the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—?' He went on: 'The matter of these three things is incomplete and the attention paid [to the Prophet] by means of them isn't correct until seven things from the knower of God are concentrated on the Prophet's person (*dhāt*)—blessings and peace be upon him—and until these seven have no other focus but his noble person. If one of them is lacking, the attention remains faulty. The first of these is the carnal soul's thought, the second fantasy (*khayāl*) which is the carnal soul's sight, the third reason, the fourth similitude (*mithāl*) which is reason's sight, the fifth the body (*dhāt*), the sixth the spirit, and the seventh science (*ilm*).

What's required for the knower of God to pay perfect attention is the exclusive focus of the imagination of these seven matters on the

Prophet's noble person. If the lights of these seven become concentrated on his person, attention occurs with love, veneration and amazement, and hopes become cut off from anything other than this.' And he said: 'If while in this state the knower of God is asked about the complexion of his child, whether it's white or not, he's overcome with confusion. If he gives an answer, he isn't aware of what he's saying. If his answer is correct, it's just because that's his habitual way of talking and nothing more. This is why what happened to Abū Bakr happened—God be pleased with him!

If the person who posed the question had waited until Abū Bakr became caliph and then asked him about the interpretation of the said dream, he'd have heard from him strange and wondrous things about it. We ourselves only know this interpretation by way of Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him! How is it possible that we'd know something and our shaykh Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him—wouldn't know it? This is inconceivable. Now the secret behind this is what we've explained to you. But God knows best!

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this is what we heard from our Shaykh who was formally unschooled—God be pleased with him! Excellence is in the hands of God and He bestows it on whom He wishes! During many years I'd sought a solution for the interpretation of this dream. I didn't find it in a written compendium, or with any other person except the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! Moreover, it's clear that what the earlier shaykhs had to say that was presented above is far from the purpose. But God knows best!

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(262) And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the truth of dreams, what their nature is and by what means they occur. For people greatly disagree on this subject.<sup>264</sup>

Physicians hold the view that dreams come from the four humors. Thus someone in whom phlegm prevails dreams that he's swimming in water, etc., because of the connection between water and the nature of phlegm. Someone in whom yellow bile prevails dreams of fires and ascending into the air and similar distressing things. Someone in whom the blood prevails dreams of sweet matters and pleasant things because blood is sweet and pleasant. And someone in

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<sup>264</sup> Cf. Gätje, 'Traumlehren', pp. 260 ff.

whom black bile prevails dreams of melancholic matters and sour things. Al-Māzarī says: 'This is to be rejected because even if reason permits such a thing, there's no evidence for it and it isn't borne out in practice. And to assert with certainty what is merely possible is an error.'

And the philosophers believe that forms which occur on earth exist as patterns in the translunar world. Whichever of the latter confront souls make an impression on them. Here as well al-Māzarī says: 'This is to be rejected because it isn't a judgement based on proof. Impressing patterns on one another is characteristic of physical bodies but most of what occurs in the translunar world are accidents and accidents don't have the ability to make impressions.'

And the Muʿtazilites hold the view that dreams are fantasies devoid of any reality and they insist on their falsity, just as they deny punishment in the grave.

[Abū Bakr] Ibn al-ʿArabī says in the *Qabas*: 'The Muʿtazilites, in accordance with their principles, proceed to deceive the multitude by denying the foundations of religious law concerning the Jinn and the *ḥadīths* about them, and denying the angels and their words. They say that if Gabriel—peace be upon him—had spoken to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with a [real] voice, those present would have heard it.'<sup>265</sup>

Ṣāliḥ<sup>266</sup> the Muʿtazilite holds the view that a dream involves seeing with the eye of the head. Ibn al-ʿArabī says: 'This is an eccentric view.'

Others believe that a dream involves seeing with the eyes in the heart and hearing with the heart's ears.

The people of the Sunna hold the view that a dream consists of beliefs and perceptions which God the Sublime creates in the heart of the person asleep, just as He creates them in the eye and heart of someone who's awake. And when He creates them, He makes them into a sign for (263) matters and things He creates in a second situation. Sometimes an angel is involved in the creation of these beliefs. Then the dream is one that bears glad tidings. But sometimes Satan is involved with it and then the dream is distressing.

And there are others who believe that dreams have an angel appointed over them. The angel presents the dream to the sleeper and

<sup>265</sup> *Qabas* III, p. 1135.

<sup>266</sup> ThG III, pp. 422-28; *ibid.* VI, pp. 208 f.; text XXIII, 10.

shows him the pictures [it contains]. Sometimes these correspond to what occurs in existence and sometimes these are similitudes that have intellectual meanings. Al-Qurṭubī<sup>267</sup> says: 'This should be rejected because it remains in need of proof.'<sup>268</sup>

Some others hold the view that the cause of dreams is the ascent of the spirit to the Celestial Throne where the sleeper sees what will happen to him.<sup>269</sup> If he doesn't wake up before his spirit reaches the Throne, the dream is true. If he does wake up before that, the dream is false. Adherents of this view cite as proof the *ḥadīth* which is set forth by al-Ḥākim and al-ʿUqaylī<sup>270</sup> in the report of Muḥammad b. ʿAjlān<sup>271</sup>—from Sālim b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿUmar<sup>272</sup>—from his father who reported: 'ʿUmar met ʿAlī and said: "Oh Abū'l-Ḥasan, people have dreams. Some of them are true and some are false." ʿAlī replied: "Yes, and I've heard the Prophet say—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'When a bondsman and a bondswoman sleep and are replete with sleep, their spirit is taken up to the Celestial Throne. If a person doesn't wake up before reaching the Throne, it's a true dream. If a person does wake up before reaching the Throne, it's a false dream.'"'

The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Dhahabī<sup>273</sup> says in his *Takhlīṣ*: 'This is a false *ḥadīth*. The person who transmits it, i.e. al-Ḥākim, doesn't attest to its authenticity and perhaps he took it from Ibn ʿAjlān's transmitter, i.e. ʿAbd Allāh al-Azdī al-Khurāsānī. Al-ʿUqaylī mentions the latter in his entry about him and says: "He shouldn't be quoted from." Then he cites a part of the *ḥadīth* by way of a different transmission from Isrāʾīl<sup>274</sup>—from Abū Ishāq<sup>275</sup>—from al-Ḥārith<sup>276</sup>—from ʿAlī, and he mentions the disagreement about whether its *isnād* is interrupted or is traceable to the Prophet.'

And there are some who believe that the dream is speech through which God—He is sublime and exalted—speaks to His bondsman.

<sup>267</sup> On him see fn. 174 above.

<sup>268</sup> Not found in al-Qurṭubī's *Tafsīr*.

<sup>269</sup> Cf. Radtke, *Ḥakīm Tirmidī*, pp. 66 f.

<sup>270</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 136, LI; died 322/934.

<sup>271</sup> TT IX, p. 341, no. 564; died 213/828.

<sup>272</sup> *Wāfi* XV, p. 83, no. 110; died 106/724.

<sup>273</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 137, LII; died 748/1348.

<sup>274</sup> TT I, p. 261, no. 495; died *circa* 160/776.

<sup>275</sup> Abū Ishāq al-Sabīʿī, Isrāʾīl's grandfather; died 127/745; GAS I, p. 283, no. 12.

<sup>276</sup> Probably al-Ḥārith al-Aʿwar; TT II, pp. 145, 248; died 65/684.



Those who maintain this view offer as proof the *ḥadīth* which has been handed down on this subject. In it the Prophet says—blessings and peace be upon him: ‘The dream of the believer is speech by which the bondsman speaks to his Lord.’ This is transmitted by al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī<sup>277</sup> from (264) ‘Ubāda b. al-Ṣāmit<sup>278</sup> in *aṣl* seventy-eight of the *Nawādir al-uṣūl*. It’s a report he transmits himself from his shaykh ‘Umar b. Abī ‘Umar<sup>279</sup> but the latter is weak [as an authority]. Besides this there are others in the chain of transmission who are unacceptable. Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī says: ‘Some Qur’ānic commentators say about God the Sublime’s words: “It belongs not to any human being that God should speak to him except by revelation or from behind a veil” (42/51), that they refer to the dream.’

Others hold the view that God the Sublime has appointed over the dream an angel who looks at the affairs of Adam’s offspring on the Well-guarded Tablet. The angel copies from the Tablet and for each person he formulates similitudes according to the person’s story. Then when the person goes to sleep, the angel causes these things to appear to him in the form of wisdom so that they’re glad tidings or a warning or a reproach for him. But Satan, out of intense hostility, may overwhelm a human being. He lays every kind of snare for him and wants to corrupt his affairs in every way. He destroys a person’s dream, either by mixing into it or by making him forget it.

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘There are two kinds of dreams, stray thoughts (*khawāṭir*) and perceptions (*idrākāt*)—just as in a waking state. For a person when awake has stray thoughts, i.e. what chances to occur in his mind. And he has perceptions that consist of what he grasps through his reason from the sciences, or the things he perceives through his senses. It’s the same for someone who’s dreaming. Sometimes what he sees while asleep consists of stray thoughts produced in his heart, and other times he perceives something and sees it. Thus the matter of dreams divides into two parts: perceptions and stray thoughts.

The first part is perceptions. Some of these are attributed to the spirit and some to the body. In reality it’s the spirit that’s the

<sup>277</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 137, LIII; died 295-300/905-10; 77th *aṣl* in the printed edition of the *Nawādir*; cf. *ibid.* p. 118; editor drops the *isnāds*.

<sup>278</sup> See fn. 175 above.

<sup>279</sup> On him see *Ḥakīm Tirmidī*, p. 28, no. 152; he was considered *dajjāl*.

spectator. Its seeing is by means of deeper vision (*baṣīra*). Deeper vision has already been explained in connection with the parts of the spirit when we discussed the *ḥadīth*: “Verily, the Qurʾān has been sent down upon seven letters.”

If the spirit sees by means of its deeper vision, this is what’s connected to the spirit and associated with it. If it sees with the vision of the body and the body’s heart, and it sees what the body usually sees, i.e. a house, a mosque, and a garden, etc., this dream is then connected to the body and associated with it.

Moreover, the spirit possesses two kinds of hearing. The first of them is the hearing it has before being enclosed within the body, and this hearing reaches the eastern and the western regions of the earth.

(265) The second of them is the hearing it has after being enclosed [in the body] and this is simply the hearing of the ear.

And the spirit possesses two kinds of sight. The first of them is from before being enclosed and this sight reaches the eastern and the western regions of the earth, and penetrates the earth’s seven layers.

The second of them is from after being enclosed and this is simply based on the eye.

And it possesses two kinds of walking. The first of them is from before being enclosed and with this it strides across the eastern and the western regions of the earth with one step.

And the second of them is from after being enclosed and this is simply based upon the leg.

Similarly, the spirit has two forms of vision (*naẓar*). The first of them is from before being enclosed, and such seeing is by means of its deeper vision and [diffused] throughout all its substances. This enables the spirit to see all the things it knows in one instant. In doing so it experiences no [dimension] of proximity or distance, so that the body it occupies and the Celestial Throne are one and the same to it.

And the second of them is from after being enclosed and this vision is simply in the heart. Thus if a person falls asleep and sees something while sleeping, sometimes he sees with the spirit’s vision and sometimes he sees with the vision of the body’s heart. The difference between what’s ascribed to the spirit and what’s ascribed to the body is one of clarity and purity. What’s ascribed to the spirit contains clarity and purity, whereas what’s ascribed to the body is the contrary of that.

For this reason the first form of vision has no need of interpretation or only very little.

As for the second form of vision, the symbols it contains are remote and concealed. The interpretation [required] is subtle and difficult. Thus if we suppose that a man wounded Zayd and suppose that Zayd saw this in a dream before it happened, then if he saw it by means of the spirit's vision, he'll have seen the man wound him. And the dream will turn out the way he saw it. But if he saw it with the body's vision, he saw a similitude such as: he was passing along a road and a stick struck him and he was wounded. In the first kind there's clarity and purity. That's because it occurs through the light of the spirit, and the spirit's light is true and it represents a thing the way it really is. The contrary is the case with the second kind. It occurs through the light of the body, and the body's light contains falsehood, and falsehood doesn't represent a thing the way it really is but distorts it and changes it. Thus in a dream it sees the camel as a frog, it sees the bird as a stone, the man as a stick, and so forth. It's rare that a body is devoid of darkness—unless the person to whom the body belongs is sinless.

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(266) Then there's the subject of darkness with its degrees that depend on its strength and its weakness, and darkness has ten degrees.

The first degree is the darkness that enters the body because one commits a reprehensible act (*makrūh*) through negligence, as for instance eating with one's left hand through negligence or some similar reprehensible act. If negligence like this occurs on the part of God's bondsman, it causes a slight amount of darkness to enter his body. Then if a person is asleep and this darkness is within his body, it will distort his dream by some slight amount when he experiences it. An example is that a man sees Paradise while asleep but he doesn't want to enter it. The interpretation of the dream is that he wanted to do a good deed that isn't obligatory but then he changed his mind. The basis for this interpretation is: performing a good deed is a cause for entering Paradise. And Paradise occurred [in the dream]. Seeing it signifies a good deed, and not wanting to enter it indicates his refusal to do a good deed. The reality of the dream without distortion would be for him to see that he wanted to do a good deed but then changed his mind. Thus the dream was

transformed, as you see, by some slight amount. The cause of this is the darkness referred to.

The second degree is the darkness that enters the body if one does something forbidden (*ḥarām*) through negligence, as for instance if someone is fasting and eats out of negligence, and other such forbidden acts which God's bondsman may commit out of negligence. He hasn't committed a sin because what he did was out of negligence. But this darkness surpasses the darkness attached to doing a reprehensible act out of negligence, and it causes greater distortion in a dream. An example is that someone sees Paradise in his sleep and wants to enter it but he's stopped from entering it. And the interpretation of the dream is that he wants to perform an act of collective duty (*fard al-kifāya*) but then changes his mind. The basis for the interpretation is the same as above. In this dream the darkness is stronger so that the man appears in the form of someone who's refused entrance to Paradise because this darkness hinders the performance of a collective duty. And here the darkness arises from doing a forbidden act out of negligence, in contrast to the previous dream. But God the Sublime knows best!

The third degree is the darkness that enters the body if one commits a reprehensible act on purpose, i.e. intentionally commits a reprehensible act, as for instance someone who intentionally eats with his left hand and suchlike. If God's bondsman does a thing like that on purpose, it causes a darkness to enter his body which is greater than the darkness caused by negligently committing a forbidden act, and this distorts his dream more than in the previous case. An example is that in a dream someone sees satans entering his house. The interpretation of the dream is that his wife is an adulteress and men go in unto her. The basis for this interpretation is that the satans in the dream signify fornicators, based on similarity and resemblance. Entering signifies sexual intercourse. The house signifies the wife. (267) This interpretation isn't hard to understand and it doesn't contain much distortion. But there's much wickedness and darkness in what the dream signifies because of the disgrace it contains and the debasement of the sacred and the violation of honor. In this stage the darkness is strong with regard to what the interpretation signifies. Thus you understand that sometimes the darkness is strong with regard to the interpretation and sometimes with regard to what the interpretation signifies.

The fourth degree is the darkness that enters the body because one does what's forbidden on purpose, i.e. intentionally does what's forbidden, as when someone commits fornication on purpose or breaks his fast on purpose or other such things. When God's bondsman behaves like this on purpose, it causes a darkness to enter his body which is greater than the darkness that preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself walking in front of a Muslim shaykh. The interpretation is that the person is a sinner, but his faith is sound. And the basis for this interpretation is that the Muslim shaykh is the faith of the dreamer, and that's because: in Islam white hair and advanced age indicate deeper vision regarding faith. Thus since the interpretation of the Muslim shaykh is the faith of the dreamer, we know that his faith is sound. Preceding him and walking in front of him indicates sins and that the possessor of this faith doesn't follow his faith but walks in front of it and pays it no attention. The darkness in this dream is strong in the interpretation. Indeed, taking the shaykh to mean sound faith in the dreamer entails much obscurity, and indicating sins by means of preceding the shaykh is also somewhat obscure. For this reason we say that the darkness it contains in this degree is greater than what preceded it. Likewise, it contains darkness with regard to what the interpretation signifies, since sins are a serious matter and they represent great danger.

The fifth degree is the darkness that enters the body because of simple ignorance about light matters of religious doctrine (*‘aqīda*). Religious doctrine is of two kinds, the light and the serious.

Ignorance of the light kind doesn't cause a person to remain in Hell-fire for eternity, but he'll be punished for it. For example, the doctrine in this case consists of the belief that God the Sublime will be seen in the hereafter, that God the Sublime isn't obliged to mete out recompense, i.e. reward and punishment, but reward comes from His bounty and punishment from His justice, and that God the Sublime has no need of an intermediary for His action, that all intermediaries and what arises from them belong to His acts—He is sublime—Hell and its fire, food and satiation, the sword and its cutting—all this is the action of God the Sublime; and that Paradise exists at this moment and Hell-fire exists at this moment, and that neither in this world nor in the world to come does God the Sublime treat anyone unjustly. This then is the light religious doctrine, and

whoever holds these articles of faith is in truth a believer (268) and his faith is complete. Whoever is ignorant of them and believes that God the Sublime will not be seen, that recompense is an obligation for Him, that He has need of an intermediary for His acts, and that Paradise and Hell-fire don't exist at this moment—the person holding these beliefs will be punished on the Day of Resurrection with a punishment greater than that meted out for sins not involving religious doctrine.

As for serious religious doctrine, this is what imposes an eternity in Hell-fire on a person who's ignorant of it. For example, it entails the belief that God the Sublime exists and His existence is characterized by pre-eternity, permanence and difference of kind, that God the Sublime acts out of free choice and His action isn't based on a natural disposition or a motive, that God the Sublime is the creator of our acts and we have no part in them, that no great person on earth such as kings and viziers participates in God the Sublime's dominion, nor anything in the heavens such as the sun, the moon and the stars and all the angels, that God the Sublime is all-hearing and God the Sublime is all-seeing and God the Sublime is all-knowing! This is what constitutes serious religious doctrine. If God's bondsman holds this to be true along with the light doctrine, his faith is complete. If God's bondsman is ignorant of it or is ignorant of some part of it, he deserves to spend eternity in Hell-fire. We beseech God for protection!

Now if you've understood this, let's return to simple ignorance with regard to light religious doctrine, and let us say that it causes darkness to enter the body which is greater than the darkness that preceded it, and it distorts a person's dream all the more. An example is that in a dream someone sees a dead man and knows he's dead. He asks him how he's faring and how God—He is mighty and glorious—has treated him. The dead man begins to complain to him about his state and his bad actions. The interpretation of the dream is that it indicates the probity of the dreamer's religion and his welfare in the hereafter, and that he'll repent of the sins he's committed. The basis for this interpretation is that: without a doubt admonition during a dream has an effect. Indeed, God—He is blessed and exalted—presents admonition to His bondsman in place of rebuke and intimidation. And what comes from God the Sublime, God carries out and brings to fulfillment. It isn't within the bondsman's

capacity to meet a dead person and to ask him about his situation. This comes from God the Sublime in that He brings together the dreamer and the dead person in order to let the dreamer hear from him what he hears and to show the dreamer mercy—He is sublime! If He had so wished—He is blessed and exalted—He could have left him wavering in his blindness. Here the darkness in the interpretation of this dream is strong and the symbol in it is obscure. The interpretation of the dream is more subtle than the one that preceded it. But God the Sublime knows best!

The sixth degree is the darkness that enters the body because of compound ignorance about light religious doctrine. For example, a person believes that God the Sublime can't be seen or that God the Sublime is obliged (269) to mete out recompense. And he's convinced he's right in this doctrinal belief. The darkness that enters the body from this compound ignorance is greater than the darkness that enters it from the degree that preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself eating from the *zaqqūm*-tree of Hell-fire and drinking of the infernal water (*ḥamīm*). The interpretation of the dream is that he's completely engrossed in what's forbidden. He gathers worldly goods illicitly and uses them for unworthy ends. The basis for this interpretation is that what's forbidden leads to Hell, and causes one to eat from the *zaqqūm*-tree and drink infernal water. The darkness in the dream has to do with the interpretation since the *zaqqūm*-tree and the infernal water are abhorrent by nature, and worldly goods are attractive by nature. Thus the distinction between them is one of abhorrence and affection. This amounts to interpretation of an opposite by means of its opposite. Similarly, what makes the interpretation remote is that the interpreted meaning is in the world, while the means of interpretation is in the hereafter—or the other way round—since the two domains are separate and the distance between them is great, which symbolizes the ugliness and abomination that is Hell, the *zaqqūm*-tree and the infernal water. Thus the darkness here is strong for three reasons. Such isn't the case in anything that preceded this. But God the Sublime knows best!

The seventh degree is the darkness that enters the body because of simple ignorance about serious religious doctrine. For instance, a person may believe something contrary to the doctrine described above but if he knew better, he'd renounce it. This darkness is greater than what preceded it. An example is that someone dreams

he's entered Hell. The interpretation of the dream is that he's afflicted by disobedience to his parents or something similar from among the great sins. The basis for the interpretation is evident. The strength of the darkness in it has to do with the interpretation and is due to the difference between the two domains. What was seen is in the hereafter, whereas the interpreted meaning is in the here and now. Because of the abhorrence of entering Hell and because the interpreted meaning is disobedience to one's parents, this is greater than being engrossed in gathering forbidden goods. For this reason the darkness of this degree is stronger. But God the Sublime knows best!

The eighth degree of darkness that enters the body is because of compound ignorance about serious religious doctrine. For instance, someone may believe that God's bondsman creates his own actions and he may be convinced he's right to hold such a view. This darkness is greater than the darkness that preceded it and more effectively distorts a dream. An example is that in a dream someone sees an angel take hold of him and cast him into Hell. The interpretation of the dream is that a decree of God the Sublime will lead him to disobey God. The basis for this interpretation is that "angel" signifies decree and "Hell" signifies disobedience (sin). The darkness it contains has to do with an angel signifying the decree. This is expressed with great obscurity, and is very symbolic and subtle. And the dream itself is abhorrent (270) because the angel taking hold of the bondsman and casting him into Hell-fire is an extremely repugnant matter. This is different from the person who dreamt that he entered Hell or that he ate from Hell's *zaqqūm*-tree and drank its infernal water, since he wasn't overpowered and forced to do so. For this reason we say that the darkness of this degree is stronger than what preceded it. But God the Sublime knows best!

The ninth degree of darkness that enters the body is because of simple ignorance about his lofty eminence, and here I'm referring to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! For instance, a person may believe in a characteristic of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—which the Prophet doesn't possess but in such a way that if he knew better, he'd renounce it. The darkness found in this degree is greater than the darkness that preceded it. For the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is the door to God—He is mighty and exalted—and whoever



is ignorant of the door and has strayed from it will never be able to enter the house. If it weren't for him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—our faith in God wouldn't be sound and we wouldn't possess anything good in this world or in the world to come. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself become a youth again, whereas he's old. The interpretation of the dream is that he's acquired much worldly wealth but he doesn't use it in obedience to God—He is mighty and glorious! The basis for this interpretation is that the state of advanced age is used to signify poverty. Youthfulness to which one has returned is used to signify wealth. There's strength of darkness in this with regard to the interpretation. Indeed, indicating the acquisition of worldly wealth by youthfulness is very obscure. And there's darkness with regard to the interpreted meaning which is the acquisition of wealth. The latter is the source of sins and the root of all disobedience, especially if it's extensive and great as in the dream. And there's darkness with regard to his not using the wealth in obedience to God—He is mighty and glorious! But God the Sublime knows best!

The tenth degree of darkness that enters the body is because of compound ignorance about his lofty eminence—the most excellent blessings and purest greetings be upon him! For instance, a person may believe that the Prophet possesses a characteristic he doesn't possess, and be convinced that he's right in this doctrinal belief. This darkness that enters the body because of the above-mentioned compound ignorance is greater than all the darkness that preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself walking behind a youth. The interpretation of the dream is that he follows the practices of the Sodomites. The basis for this interpretation is obvious. And there's strength of darkness in it with regard to its interpreted meaning, since the practice of the Sodomites is one of the greatest sins. We beseech God for protection, through His grace and His generosity!

And al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'These are the degrees of darkness associated with the vision of the body.

(271) As for the degrees of purity in vision associated with the spirit, they also number ten, being the elimination of the previous ten, and their antithesis. For this reason they're the reverse of what preceded with regard to the light and the serious. The most serious of the previous ten degrees is compound ignorance about his lofty

eminence [the Prophet]. Its absence is the lightest of the ten degrees of purity belonging to the spirit. Following it in lightness is the absence of simple ignorance about his lofty eminence. Then comes absence of compound ignorance about serious religious doctrine. Next is absence of simple ignorance about it. Then absence of intentionally doing what's forbidden, then absence of intentionally doing what's reprehensible. Next absence of doing what's forbidden through negligence, then absence of doing what's reprehensible through negligence. This last one is the most serious of them because absence of doing what's reprehensible through negligence may entail ignorance, both simple and compound, about the two kinds of religious doctrine and about his lofty eminence. We'll now indicate examples of these ten distinguishing characteristics.

Know that when the spirit sees a dream by means of its deeper vision and its pure vision, it sees it the way it really is, without change and alteration. If the spirit then wants to pass on the dream, it looks in the body and if the body is devoid of darkness and protected from all its forms, it passes the dream to the body just as it saw it, without change and alteration. But if there's darkness in the body, distortion and interpretation occur in the conveyance in accordance with the degree and the amount of darkness. This means that when the spirit conveys what it's seen to the body, it transmits it to the body in one of two ways. The pure body doesn't experience distortion when conveyance takes place, since the distortion of a dream is caused by darkness and in this case it's assumed that the body is devoid of this. As for the body which isn't pure, it experiences distortion depending on the amount of darkness it contains because even if purity occurs, darkness affects the body in some other way. In short, purity is either complete, which is only the case with the bodies of those who are protected from sin—blessings and peace be upon them—or it's partial, which means purity in one way but not in another. For this reason purity possesses ten degrees. Let's proceed to arrange them in the reverse order of the first ten we dealt with. Thus we say:

The first degree is absence of compound ignorance about his lofty eminence [the Prophet]. This purity from such ignorance is above all other purity. That's why the dream endowed with it is like something which has no need at all of interpretation. (272) An example is that in a dream someone sees God—He is exalted—Who is satisfied and

pleased with him, and smiling at him. The interpretation of the dream is that God is pleased with him and that his acts are pure in God's view—He is sublime and exalted!

The second degree is absence of simple ignorance about his lofty eminence. This purity is lower than what preceded it but it comes next in rank. That's why the dream endowed with it only needs a little interpretation. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself quarreling with angels. The interpretation of the dream is that some of his limbs will suffer from boils, scabies and fracturing, without the usual cause. The basis for this interpretation is that the one who saw is the spirit, and the angels whom it saw are the body's angels in charge of protecting the body. The one quarreling with them was the spirit because when the spirit saw what was going to happen to the body, i.e. the boils, etc., it fell to quarreling with the guardian angels. It was as if the spirit said: "This is due to your negligence regarding what you've been entrusted with." Thus this dream is like speech which has something missing from it. If it's supplemented, the speech is sound and the meaning is clear. The same holds true here. If the cause of the quarrel is mentioned, the matter of the dream is clear and it has no need of any interpretation.

The third degree is absence of compound ignorance about serious religious doctrine. This purity follows what preceded it. That's why the dream associated with it requires interpretation. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself standing before God the Sublime in fear and terror. The interpretation of the dream is that the person will suffer a calamity from which God the Sublime will deliver him and the person will receive a great recompense for this. The basis for this interpretation is that standing before God the Sublime only occurs in the hereafter and only involves the believers. If the body of this believer hasn't been cleansed of darkness, then some rebuke is found in that dream. But his final outcome is salvation and spending eternity in Paradise. If a sleeper dreams that he's standing before God in such a situation, the truth of his dream is what's been said above. The viewer in the dream is the spirit. The interpretation only applies to the conveyance to the body and not to any darkness in the vision of the spirit. If the viewer of this dream is one of the Friends and knowers of God or one of the prophets and apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—the dream is to be

interpreted differently. To explain this would take us time. But God the Sublime knows best!

The fourth degree is absence of simple ignorance about serious religious doctrine. This purity follows what preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees ʿAzrāʾīl—peace be upon him—and the angel is laughing (273) and joyful with him. This means long life for the person dreaming. The basis for this interpretation is that there's nothing which a person would rejoice about with this noble angel except long life. The darkness that occurs in the interpretation after the conveyance concerns the obscurity of the symbol. Indicating the long life of the viewer by means of the laughter of this noble angel is subtle and obscure. But God the Sublime knows best!

The fifth degree is absence of compound ignorance about light religious doctrine. This absence and purity follows what preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him! The interpretation of this dream is that it indicates the viewer's great love for the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The darkness it contains—which occurred in the conveyance—has to do with interpreting Abū Bakr as the viewer's love for the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—since there's no close association between the two of them [Abū Bakr and the dreamer]. That's why the darkness of conveyance in the dream is stronger than the darkness that preceded it. But God the Sublime knows best!

The sixth degree is absence of simple ignorance about light religious doctrine. And this absence follows what preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees angels in a particular place. The interpretation of the dream is that a mosque will be built in this place where God the Sublime will be worshipped, praised and sanctified. The basis for this interpretation is obvious. The darkness of conveyance it contains is because of the remoteness of the world of lights, i.e. the angels that are to be interpreted, from the world that consists of other than God, i.e. the mosque—the meaning given in the interpretation. What preceded the present degree wasn't like this. But although there's no close association between what must be interpreted [the angels] and the meaning given by the interpretation [the mosque], none the less they belong to one world. But God knows best!

The seventh degree is absence of intentionally doing something forbidden. And it follows what preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees Isrāfil in a particular location. The interpretation of the dream is that it indicates a great affliction or a great joy that will befall the location. The basis for the interpretation is that this noble angel—peace be upon him—has been put in charge of affliction and joys. And indeed, the darkness of conveyance it contains is stronger than what preceded it. This is because Isrāfil isn't widely known for his effect on lives as is ʿAzrāʾīl,<sup>280</sup> and also because of the remoteness of the world of lights from the world that consists of other than God. Thus the dream contains what was in the previous one and even more. But God knows best!

The eighth degree is absence of intentionally doing something reprehensible. And this follows what preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees himself surrounded by satans. The interpretation of this dream is that the satans are robbers attacking him or thieves stealing his goods or people who slander him unjustly. The basis for the interpretation is obvious. The darkness (274) of conveyance it contains is in what the interpretation signifies, for it's something that the person dreaming finds reprehensible. But God knows best!

The ninth degree is absence of doing something forbidden out of negligence. And this follows what preceded it. An example is that in a dream someone sees the Resurrection occur in a particular place. The interpretation of the dream is that the situation of this place will change. If it was a place of justice, it will be transformed into a place of injustice and oppression. If it was the opposite of this, it will become the opposite. The darkness of conveyance it contains is in the interpretation because of the remoteness of the real Resurrection from the situation referred to. Similarly, the transformation from justice to injustice is far removed from the occurrence of the Resurrection, since the latter entails no injustice. This isn't like earlier when someone saw Isrāfil in a dream—peace be upon him—because he's responsible for the two states in the previous interpretation, which is different from the occurrence of the Resurrection in our present case. But God knows best!

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<sup>280</sup> Isrāfil will sound the trumpet that brings the world to an end, whereas ʿAzrāʾīl is the angel of death.

The tenth degree is absence of doing something reprehensible out of negligence. And this follows what preceded it. Moreover, it's the most serious of them all and contains the most darkness in its conveyance. An example is that someone dreams he's a beloved friend of the satans and one of their intimate and close associates. The interpretation of the dream is that his associates are bad company, and the basis for the interpretation is obvious. Look at the darkness in this degree. It's almost like the darkness which is found in the body's vision, for a man's religion is that of his friends. If there's no good in a person's associates, there's no good in the person. The darkness in the dream almost points to the wickedness of the body and its bad behavior, like the darkness in the ten divisions associated with the body. Indeed, each division refers to a particular wickedness in the body, even if their ranks are different as has been previously described. But God the Sublime knows best!

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that the inevitable conclusion is that the cause of interpretation [when required] is the darkness which is in the body, even if it differs in its degrees. This is because in the spirit's dream darkness makes interpretation necessary when there's conveyance. In the body's dream it makes interpretation necessary with regard to the dream itself. And vision is as has been previously explained. If, on the other hand, there's no darkness in the body because of its being protected in every respect, as is the case with the prophets' bodies—blessings and peace be upon them—then the need for interpretation disappears with the disappearance of its cause, its cause being darkness. None the less, we've come across many dreams of prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—where interpretation has occurred, such as in the dream of Joseph—peace be upon him—which is mentioned in God the Sublime's words:

'I saw eleven stars, and the sun and the moon. I saw them prostrating themselves before me' (12/4).

(275) But those who prostrated themselves before him were in reality his brothers and his parents. The proof of this is God the Sublime's words:

'And they fell down in prostration before him, and he said: "Oh my father, this is the interpretation of my dream from before. My Lord has made it true"' (12/100).

And one of these is the dream of Abraham—peace be upon him—in God the Sublime's words:

‘He said: “Oh my son, I see in a dream that I will sacrifice you. Consider what you think!”’ (37/102). But what was sacrificed in reality was the ram, as in God the Sublime’s words: ‘We ransomed him with a great sacrifice’ (37/107).

Another one is the dream of our Prophet and our master Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—regarding the cow that was slaughtered, the sword whose point was broken, and the strong armor. He interpreted the cow as persons among his Companions who would die [in the battle of Uḥud], and the break in the sword as a man from his family who would die, and the strong armor as Medina, i.e. if he didn’t leave Medina, nothing bad would happen to him. And another one is his dream—peace be upon him—that the people came before him with shirts on and some of the shirts reached their breast and others reached lower down. And he saw ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb who had on a robe that trailed on the ground.<sup>281</sup> He was asked: ‘How do you interpret this, oh Apostle of God?’ He replied: ‘As religion.’ And he had other dreams besides these—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—which required an explanation and an interpretation.

Then al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The sleep of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon him—isn’t like the sleep of other people. They experience the vision of truth even when they’re asleep. That’s why their eyes slept but their hearts didn’t sleep. And for this reason their dreams are divided into direct sight (*mu‘āyana*) and revelation.

As for direct sight, this entails that the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—sees something in sleep and the dream turns out just as it was seen in sleep, with nothing added or left out and no change or alteration. An example of this is the Prophet’s dream—blessings and peace be upon him—in which he saw himself and his Companions enter the Holy Mosque in Mecca in security, with their heads shaved and their hair cut short. In connection with this God the Sublime sent down [the words]:

(276) “Verily, God has made the dream of His Apostle turn out to be true” (48/27).

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<sup>281</sup> Sense uncertain.

Here the dream isn't associated especially with the spirit or especially with the body but with both together because both are in conformity with limpidity and purity.

Also in this category is everything the Prophet saw on the night of the Ascension—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and this he experienced one time through the spirit—blessings and peace be upon him—and another time through his noble body. The time he experienced this through the spirit, it was a dream during sleep and his body was asleep. The spirit then saw what it saw and the experience required no explanation and interpretation. In short, the dream in this category is like vision with the eyes (*baṣar*) and just as there's no alteration in deeper vision (*baṣīra*), in this case as well no alteration occurs.

As for the second category which is revelation, this consists of every dream of the prophets which requires interpretation. To be precise, in this category the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—didn't see something outside himself which he turned his attention to, neither in his spirit nor in his body. Rather God the Sublime spoke to him telling him what He wanted from him, through a command and a prohibition or by informing him of something. However, God—He is exalted—substituted for His awesome speech things which He created for the prophets and they see, and the things are an intermediary for them so they may know the revelation. This is like when someone is given a command through a sign, or a prohibition through a sign, and is informed about something by means of a symbol and a hint. These things that occur in their dreams are matters which God contrives—He is sublime—in order to communicate between Himself—He is exalted—and His noble prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and the prophets understand what these things mean. After all, we ourselves understand the meaning of a special gesture or a hint and a sign. That's why the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—obey these things and accord them the same status as revelation in a waking state.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The secret behind these things in the previously mentioned dreams is that the elucidation and communication happen by means of something which entails [higher] vision (*mushāhada*). And the prophets—blessings (277) and peace be upon them—continually experience vision even while



they're asleep. In beholding God the Sublime in His creation, they resemble a bird that doesn't remain in the same situation. Sometimes you see the bird on this branch and sometimes on another branch. Now it's on this tree, now it's on another tree. One time it's on the earth, another time in the sky. The prophets are like this—blessings and peace be upon them! One time they experience vision when they look at the heavens and the earth. Another time when they look at the stars, the sun and the moon. If they observe these things, they become aware of the awesomeness of the Creator—He is sublime—and they experience an immense vision beyond any description. Thus, if God—He is exalted—wishes to inform them of something extraneous in this state of vision, He shows it to them by means of something that contains vision. This was the case with Joseph's dream—peace be upon him! He experienced a vision of God the Sublime when he slept and beheld the stars, the sun and the moon, because his spirit ascended to the heavens and then experienced the vision just mentioned. When God the Sublime wished to inform him that his parents and his brothers would prostrate themselves before him, He made him behold prostration in the stars, the sun and the moon, which contain vision. Now this was because Joseph's interior—peace be upon him—was so absorbed in what contained vision. He had no interest in anything that didn't contain vision and felt no desire for it.

Similarly, Abraham—peace be upon him—experienced a vision when he became aware of God the Sublime's benefaction to the father through the child and the circumstances of this immense benefaction. Thus when God the Sublime wished to inform him about the sacrifice of the ram—which was a ransom—He made him see the sacrifice in what contained vision, i.e. in the child and His benefaction through him. And this can be said of all the previous dreams. But God knows best!

This is what pertains to the kind of dream that consists of perceptions (*idrākāt*).

As for the second kind of dream, it consists of stray thoughts (*khawāṭir*). I asked al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about the cause of dreams, and the answer he gave me to my question was an explanation of this kind of dream. The following is the text of what I wrote down on the subject.

One day I asked him—God be pleased with him—about what someone asleep sees in his sleep.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘What causes the difference and variety of dreams is the difference and variety (278) of the body’s stray thoughts. And the cause of the difference between stray thoughts and their variety is supernatural (*ghaybī*). Most of God’s creatures are unable to understand it.’

Then I asked: ‘And what is it?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s God the Sublime’s action in the heart of the bondsman, and His action—He is exalted—in the bondsman’s heart doesn’t cease during the waking state or during sleep until the spirit leaves the body [at the time of death]. Every movement in the heart, from the bondsman’s birth to his death, is the effect of God’s action—He is blessed and exalted! By means of this movement God wishes a particular fixed thing and this thing occurs in the heart. If the heart is moved a second time, its second movement is another stray occurrence and the same is true for a third movement, and so it continues. So if God wishes good for His bondsman, or knows good about him, then the stray thought of the first movement is good and the stray thought of the second one is good, and so on. But if God wishes bad for His bondsman, the stray thought of the first movement that God the Sublime wishes is bad. And the stray thought of all the movements is like this, until God restores His favor unto him and wishes good for him. Then the stray thoughts become good and the bondsman moves about in good. All the works of God’s bondsmen proceed from their stray thoughts, and their stray thoughts proceed from the movements of their hearts. The movements of their hearts proceed from God the Sublime’s actions in hearts and what He wills in them.’

I asked: ‘Is this the meaning of the bondsman’s heart being between two fingers of the Compassionate One and He alters it as He wishes?’<sup>282</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, it is.’

I was then overcome with great anxiety and complete fear about the movements of hearts and their fluctuations. I realized that the foundation of felicity in its entirety and wretchedness in its totality depended on these movements. We beseech God the Sublime Who

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<sup>282</sup> Cf. for example *Drei Schriften* II, p. 160/*Concept of Sainthood*, p. 219.

holds our hearts in His hand and under Whose wrath and dominion reside all our affairs, that He set our hearts in motion as pleases Him and meets His approval.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Furthermore, the fruits of these movements in the heart—whether good or otherwise—are under a deadline of seven days. This means that God’s purpose behind the movement may have effect on the bondsman and overtake him immediately or a bit later. It may take some time but the limit of the delay is seven days. So the bondsman may do something (279) one day, whereas the movement [causing it] occurred one or more days earlier. Plants provide the similitude for this. Some of them appear the same day. But then some appear later and others earlier. And yet the seed is one: “Blessed be God, the best of creators!” (23/14).’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Now if you’ve understood this and you realize that the source of stray thoughts is the will of God the Sublime in the heart, then know that a person possesses two states, the waking state and the state of sleep.

As for the waking state, the body has dominion during it and the spirit is subordinate. The dominion of the body is ignorance and lack of knowledge about things as they really are. Thus if “pilgrimage” occurs in the mind of the bondsman in a waking state, it passes through his consciousness with no further effect. And if “sky” or “Paradise” or “Hell-fire” or other such things pass through his consciousness, nothing affects the bondsman—while in a waking state—except the awareness of this.

As for the state of sleep, [at this time] the senses of bodies are inactive and their limbs are in repose. But the action of God the Sublime in the heart is continual. It rests neither in a waking state, nor in sleep. So if the heart is set in motion by one stray thought—like those just mentioned—the spirit looks at it without the dominion of bodies. The spirit was created with knowledge and if it looks at the thought, it perceives it the way it really is—with a perception that replaces the sight of the eye. Thus if someone sees himself in a dream above the heavens or on pilgrimage or in some special place on earth, the secret behind this is what we’ve mentioned, that the thought of this place passes through the heart. Then the spirit follows it and perceives it in its way with a perception like that of the eye and direct vision.’ This is the gist of what I wrote down.

The difference between this kind of dream—which is stray thoughts—and the first kind—which is perception—even if both kinds contain some perception, is that if the perception involved is preceded by a stray thought, then the dream belongs to muddled dreams that can't be interpreted. Such is the case with this kind. On the other hand, if the perception isn't preceded by a stray thought but attention and aspiration from the body or from the spirit focus on it without stray thoughts being set in motion, then the dream is true and is susceptible to interpretation. The kinds of dreams were described earlier where we enumerated a total of twenty kinds. But God knows best!

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(280) He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for someone who sees the chief of existence in a dream—God's blessings and peace be upon him—his dream is divided into two kinds. The first of them requires no interpretation because he sees him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—as he really was in the here and now just as his Companions—God be pleased with them—observed him. And if the dreamer is one of the people of illumination (*ahl al-faṭḥ*) and divine knowledge (*'irfān*), possessed of vision and direct sight, he sees his pure and noble body. If he isn't one of the people of illumination, sometimes his dream is like that—though this is an exception—and sometimes—as in most cases—he sees an image of his noble body, not the actual body itself. This is so because there are images of his pure, noble body by means of which he's seen in many places in a dream and in a waking state. This is the case because his body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—possesses a light which it diffuses. The whole world is filled with it and there's no place in the world which doesn't contain the noble light. It's in this light that his body takes on appearance—blessings and peace be upon him—the way the image of the face appears in a mirror. The light is sent down like a single mirror that fills the entire world and what's delineated in it is the [Prophet's] eminent body. This is why a man in the east can see him—blessings and peace be upon him—and another man in the west and another in the south and another in the north, as well as countless people in different places at one and the same time. Each person sees him before himself because the eminent light in which his body is depicted is present with each one of them. But the person who has received illumination (*al-maṭṭūḥ* 'alayhi) sees the Prophet's

image before him and follows it with his deeper vision. He then penetrates by means of its light to the eminent body's location. And this may happen to someone who hasn't received illumination, because God the Sublime bestows on him the sight of the eminent body. Then the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—comes to him in the person's place, as if the Prophet knew the perfection of the person's love [for him] and sincerity in this. The matter is entrusted to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and he shows his eminent body to whomever he wishes and its image to whomever he wishes.

Moreover, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—can appear in other images, images as numerous as the number of prophets and apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—and images as numerous as the number of the Friends in his community from his time—blessings and peace be upon him—up until the Day of Resurrection. Regarding the number just referred to, the truth is that it isn't known. It's said that the prophets number one hundred and twenty-four thousand. Thus the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—has one hundred and twenty-four thousand images in which he can appear. And the same number is given to the Friends in his community—blessings and peace be upon him—and thus the Prophet can appear in two hundred and forty-eight thousand images because all of them derive from his light—blessings and peace be upon him! For this reason it often happens (281) that disciples see him—blessings and peace be upon him—in the person of their shaykhs.<sup>283</sup>

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that one time I dreamt I saw the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—in the form of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and I embraced him—blessings and peace be upon him—wishing to cause him to enter my interior. Then the Shaykh said to me: 'This can't happen all at once. It takes place gradually, little by little.' By this he meant that if the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—enters the dreamer's interior, it only occurs in stages. These words I attributed to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—because he spoke to me from a different direction, and the body I embraced did nothing but smile

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<sup>283</sup> Cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 203, l. 7 to p. 204, l. 2.

and indicate happiness with me. This was the only thing I noticed. But God knows best!

[Al-Dabbāgh continued:] ‘The second kind of dream in which he sees the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—involves interpretation. The interpretation in this instance is about the degrees of darkness, not about explaining the dream. Indeed, the dream is perfectly real and requires no explanation. The person who sees the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—sees the truth. Let’s now indicate the degrees of darkness that occur in this. Thus we say:

1) If someone sees the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—and he incites him toward the world, the darkness of that person’s body is in the first degree which is doing what’s reprehensible through negligence. This dream contains darkness because the Prophet’s body—blessings and peace be upon him—is engaged in indicating the everlasting Truth—He is exalted—and not the ephemeral world.

2) If someone sees the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—giving him wealth, the person’s darkness is in the second degree which is doing what’s forbidden through negligence. Here the darkness is stronger because bestowing what’s ephemeral and placing it in someone’s hands is stronger than simply indicating it.

(282) 3) If someone sees him—blessings and peace be upon him—in a filthy place, the person’s darkness is in the third degree which is intentionally doing what’s reprehensible.

4) If someone sees him—blessings and peace be upon him—as a small boy, the person’s darkness is in the fourth degree which is intentionally doing what’s forbidden.

5) If someone sees him—blessings and peace be upon him—as grown up but without a beard [yet], the person’s darkness is in the fifth degree which is simple ignorance about light religious doctrine.

6) If someone sees him—blessings and peace be upon him—and he’s black, the person’s darkness is in the sixth degree which is compound ignorance about light religious doctrine.’

Only know—God give you success—that a complete, accurate treatment of dreams and the marvels they contain depends upon knowledge of the science of interpretation which is something conferred as a gift and veiled, i.e. something which must be kept veiled and concealed. For my part, I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—for many years about the interpretation of what

we see when we sleep. He'd reply—God be pleased with him: 'Ask me about anything and I'll tell what I know, but not about this. Don't ask me about this, for it's one of the veiled matters.' How often I beseeched him—God be pleased with him—regarding this subject and I repeated the question time and again but he always gave me the same answer .

That was until God the Sublime bestowed [on me] certain answers I heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and I then wrote them down. This includes what was explained previously about the dream of Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him—that is to say, the dream Abū Bakr interpreted and whose interpretation the Prophet then rejected—blessings and peace be upon him! And al-Dabbāgh only spoke to me about this subject with reluctance. He said: 'The full accurate treatment of what you've asked me about depends on knowledge of the science of interpretation. And that can't be learned since it depends on:

1) Knowledge of the dreamer's circumstances which lie outside his body such as whether he lives a sedentary life or is a bedouin, whether he's a religious scholar or of the common people, what his profession is—a grocer or a merchant or a craftsman, whether he's one of the rich or one of the poor, and other such things concerning circumstances that can scarcely be confined within limits.

And it depends on:

2) Knowledge of the internal circumstances such as whether the spirit has assisted the body by means (283) of all its parts which come to a total of three hundred and sixty-six or only with one of them, whether this part is the greatest or the smallest, how the secret of reason was placed in the body, and what the dreamer's thought and mind occupies itself with.

Thus, if we suppose a hundred men come to someone versed in this science and each of them says: "I saw in a dream that I drank honey", he'll give each person a different interpretation because the interpretation depends on the external and internal circumstances mentioned above. Out of these hundred no two people, let alone a third person, are the same in this respect.'

Now this contains the utmost useful lesson. Peace!

[4]

I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of the Prophet's words—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with regard to acting rightly (*ihsān*):

‘Worship God as if you see Him.’

He offered an explanation of this—God be pleased with him—by means of a similitude: ‘Suppose, for instance, that a man comes to an open area where he sees no one and begins calling out the name of a rich person who's absent, and says: “Oh my lord So-and-so, give me this or do that for me. I'm in need of such-and-such.” But he does it as if he's play-acting, not as if he's a [real] beggar. Everyone who sees him makes fun of him and laughs at him, even though in his imagination the man thinks his play-acting is the ultimate in begging and that he's devoted to the rich man's door. Yet this too is the utmost calamity on his part and an increase of error upon error.’ The Shaykh went on: ‘If before asking the rich man [for help], he'd stood in front of him and when asking him with his tongue, his body had first bowed to him and lowered its limbs before him and he'd grovelled in his presence and beseeched him to the utmost and omitted no form of visible humility in his limbs—the rich man would look upon him with a compassionate glance and give him what he asked for. An observer might think that he granted the beggar's request because of his asking with his tongue. But in fact he granted it because of the beggar's interior humility which was visible in all his limbs. It's impossible that at that moment anything but the rich man resided in his interior.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The meaning contained in this similitude and the difference between the two states [of mind] it illustrates is what the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—referred to in his words: “Worship God as if you see Him.” (284) That is to say: “Whoever worships God the Sublime as if he were in His presence, his worship is good (*aḥsana*). Whoever doesn't do so, it isn't.” Whether the worship is accomplished with presence or with negligence can be observed in the worshipper's interior at the time of his worshipping. If his interior abounds in the vision of ephemeral things and needs which distract one from God the Sublime, he's like the first man [in the similitude]. On the other hand, if his interior is devoid of everything other than God the Sublime, he's completely



devoted to Him and focused upon Him—He is exalted! He's like the second man.'

Then I said: 'The *ḥadīth* is different in al-Bukhārī and in Muslim. In al-Bukhārī<sup>284</sup> faith (*īmān*) is mentioned first, Islam (*islām*) is second and *iḥsān* comes third. But in Muslim<sup>285</sup> Islam comes first, after it comes faith, and *iḥsān* comes third.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'I prefer al-Bukhārī's version and what's in his *ḥadīth*. Indeed, Islam is the outward garb of faith but faith comes first and Islam comes after it.'

I said: 'But Islam precedes faith, as is proven by God the Sublime's words:

"The Arabs maintain: 'We believe.' Say: 'You do not believe. Instead say: "We have accepted Islam." For faith has not yet entered your hearts' (49/14)."

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'We're speaking about the real Islam mentioned in the *ḥadīth* of Gabriel which is the outward garb of faith. The difference between the two shaykhs al-Bukhārī and Muslim has to do with this. As for the Islam of someone who's accepted Islam with his tongue and for appearances only, this is desolation upon desolation and such a person has nothing in his hand. Rather he's like someone who sees a group of people shooting bullets with guns and hitting [things] with them. They level the guns at the designated target, fix their gaze and shoot. Then they look to see how they've done and whether they've hit the target or not. Now this man who's watching comes up to them and imitates them. He stretches out one hand and makes a fist with the other. He does this in place of having a gun. Then he shoots [with] his eyes and he looks to see if he's hit the target or not. And when the guns of the others in the group go off, his gun lies because he doesn't have a gun.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This is a similitude for someone who only accepts Islam with his tongue. He performs ritual prayer but his interior says: "You have no prayers", and he fasts but his interior bears witness that he keeps no fast, and he gives alms, goes on the pilgrimage (285) and fights in holy war but his interior declares that he does this for appearances. His exterior is in one *wadī*, while his interior is in another *wadī*, just as that man knows he has no gun in his hand but is simply play-acting. The hypocrites are

<sup>284</sup> *Faṭḥ* I, p. 157, no. 50.

<sup>285</sup> *Ṣaḥīḥ* I, pp. 30 f.

like this. They know that in their hands there's nothing to do with Islam.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was right with regard to this similitude. Indeed, God—He is mighty and glorious—relates about the hypocrites the same as what is in this similitude, where He says—He is exalted: 'When they're alone with their satans, they say: "We're with you. We were only mocking [them]"' (2/14).

With this similitude concerning their evil intentions and the wickedness of their secret thoughts God has exposed the state of the hypocrites in a way that couldn't be worse. Before I heard this similitude, I thought they did possess ritual prayer, fasting, the pilgrimage, alms-giving and holy war in their heart and interior and that these simply weren't accepted from them [by God] because of their unbelief. But when I heard this similitude, their affair was revealed to me and it became clear to me in just what way they're the most wicked of the infidels. We beseech God for protection, through His grace and His generosity!

[5]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth* of al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥunṭab<sup>286</sup> transmitted from Anas b. Mālik—God be pleased with him—from the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who said:

'I looked at the sins in my community and I saw no sin greater than when a man is given a Qur'ānic verse and he then forgets it.'<sup>287</sup>

I said to al-Dabbāgh: 'Al-Tirmidhī has transmitted from al-Bukhārī that the *ḥadīth* is defective (*ma'lūl*) because al-Muṭṭalib b. Ḥunṭab didn't hear [*ḥadīths*] from Anas b. al-Mālik. Consequently, the *ḥadīth* is "interrupted" between al-Muṭṭalib and Anas. And the same is transmitted by Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal—God have mercy on him! Thus all three, al-Tirmidhī, al-Bukhārī and Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal have judged it to be defective for the reason just mentioned. This has been transmitted from them by the imam Abū (286) Muḥammad °Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Ishbīlī in *al-Aḥkām al-kubrā*,<sup>288</sup> by the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar in the

<sup>286</sup> *Usd V*, p. 189, no. 4944.

<sup>287</sup> Not found in *Concordance*.

<sup>288</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 137, LIV; died 581/1185.

*Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*,<sup>289</sup> and by the shaykh ʿAbd al-Raʿūf al-Munāwī in the *Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaḡhīr*.<sup>290</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The *ḥadīth* is sound, and the light of the Prophet is contained in it—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! But it doesn’t refer to a person who’s learned a Qurʾānic verse and then forgotten it, i.e. forgotten its wording even though he acts in accordance with it. Rather it refers to someone who hears the Qurʾān but turns away from it. He holds back his body from its light and replaces the light with darkness which is its opposite, because he turns away from the truth it contains and follows the error which is darkness that distances a person from God the Sublime both in this world and in the hereafter.’ And he went on: ‘This is like the situation of the hypocrites in the time of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! The *ḥadīth* arrived because of them, it came down for their sake, and it refers to them, because they belong to the community that will give an answer, which is a special community in the eyes of the people. And there’s no greater sin within the community that will give an answer than their hypocrisy and their interior unbelief. We beseech God for protection from it!’

And I asked: ‘What’s the light of the Qurʾān that you referred to?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Qurʾān contains three lights. The first is the light which points to God. The second is the light of obeying the commands. And the third is the light of avoiding what’s been prohibited. The person who hinders these three lights from entering his body—after he’s heard them in the Qurʾān—he’s the one intended in the *ḥadīth*.’ And he added—God be pleased with him: ‘A Qurʾānic verse is confirmed by being pronounced, which memorization is concerned with, (287) and recitation is confirmed by uttering the meaning which action and obedience are concerned with.<sup>291</sup> This second point is the essence of the three lights, and this is what’s intended by the *ḥadīth* in question.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘A Qurʾānic verse from God the Sublime in the possession of the believer is like a check which contains a rightful claim. The beneficiary of the claim doesn’t let his check get lost, because if he loses it and abandons it, he loses his

<sup>289</sup> Not found in the *Fath*.

<sup>290</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 137, LV; died 1031/1621.

<sup>291</sup> Sense of the sentence is unclear.

claim. This is how it is with the Qurʾānic verse. It contains a claim for the believer. If he memorizes the verse and acts in accordance with it, his claim is confirmed before God the Sublime and by means of it he's entitled to enter Paradise. If he abandons it and turns away from it in mockery and scorn, he's committed a grave sin and he's the one referred to in the *ḥadīth*. But God knows best!

[6]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:

'Paradise and Hell-fire had an argument. Hell-fire said: "I've been entrusted with the high and mighty." Paradise replied: "What's that to me? Only the weak and the dregs among the people are admitted unto me."' <sup>292</sup>

I said: 'Paradise acknowledges to Hell-fire that Hell-fire is the victor, because it's distinguished by [receiving] the high and mighty, whereas Paradise takes in the weak and wretched.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The dwelling place in the House of the hereafter corresponds to the situation of its inhabitants. If its inhabitants are people of pride, conceit and haughtiness, something of the inhabitants' characteristics spreads to the dwelling place, but if its inhabitants are people of humility and contrition, poverty and need, something of this as well spreads to the dwelling place. It's well known that the people of Hell are endowed with arrogance and tyrannical behavior, and that the people of Paradise are endowed with humility and contrition. And so the characteristics of its inhabitants appear in Hell and the characteristics of its inhabitants appear in Paradise. The external level of the words of the *ḥadīth* is about the dispute between Paradise and Hell-fire, but the intention is to reveal the interior of the inhabitants of the one and the other. That's why Hell-fire uses words in its argument that contain egotism and haughtiness, while Paradise uses words in its argument that contain humility and contrition. If you reflect, you'll understand that Paradise's argument is superior to that of Hell-fire because the gist of their argument comes down to Paradise (288) saying: "Only the servants of God who are humble, fearful [of God] and knowers of their Lord—He is mighty and glorious—are admitted unto me", and to Hell-fire saying: "Only the high and mighty, and the tyrannical, who are ignorant of their Lord and exiled from His

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<sup>292</sup> *Concordance I*, p. 420.

presence and the courtyard of His mercy, are admitted unto me.” In short, it’s as if Paradise says: “Only those whom God the Sublime loves are admitted unto me”, and it’s as if Hell-fire says: “Only those whom God detests are admitted unto me.”

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that this a very good answer. Because of it the above-mentioned difficulty disappears and because of it another difficulty as well disappears. This is that one might ask: ‘Why didn’t Paradise say the prophets of God, His apostles, the angels and His faithful servants are admitted unto me, and make this its argument against Hell-fire? Why did Paradise present itself as defeated and say: “What’s this to me? Only the weak and the dregs among the people are admitted unto me.” Why didn’t it mention the noble and the excellent among the people, they being the prophets and the apostles?’ Now this, as we say, was the intention of Paradise and it’s as if it did say so and make it clear. But it framed its words in the above form in order to show the humility and contrition in the interior of its people. Indeed, every one of its inhabitants sees no one among God’s creatures as more needy than himself and sees himself as the weakest and poorest of the people and the most in need of God—He is mighty and glorious! But God knows best!’

[7]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of the following *ḥadīth*:

‘When at the beginning of revelation Gabriel—peace be upon him—was late in coming to the chief of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—the Prophet ascended to the top of a mountain and wanted to throw himself down because of longing to meet Gabriel. Then Gabriel—peace be upon him—appeared to him and said: “Verily, you’re the Apostle of the Lord of the worlds.” He then grew calm—blessings and peace be upon him!’<sup>293</sup>

I said: ‘Throwing oneself from a mountain top is suicide, and that’s a grave sin. The desire and the decision to do so is a sin. But the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and especially the chief of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—are protected from all sins both before and after they’re sent forth.’

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<sup>293</sup> Not found in *Concordance*; editor’s ftn., I, p. 288, is incorrect.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘I know a man who at the beginning [of his spiritual development] threw himself to the ground from the roof<sup>294</sup> of his house ninety times in one day. Nor did this hurt him in the least any more than it hurt him to sleep in a bed. That’s because in beginning periods the spirit has dominance over the body, and existing things are [all] one and the same (289) to the spirit. The spirit sits cross-legged in the air just as it sits cross-legged on the ground, and it sleeps in the air just as a person sleeps lying in his bed. And in the same way stone, silk, wool and water have no harmful effect on it. If the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—had thrown himself down, he wouldn’t have felt any pain, much less killed himself. In this case his determination to do so is of no importance.’

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that what one observes among those endowed with mystical states comes from this. You see that one of them, if a state comes over him, strikes his head against a wall with all his force and he doesn’t suffer a scratch, let alone anything else. What wonderful forms of knowledge come forth from our Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

I would also add that the man who threw himself down [from the roof] ninety times was our Shaykh himself—God be pleased with him! I heard this from him when he gave me the answer to the above question.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Moreover, they know that throwing themselves down like this and other such things won’t hurt them at all and won’t ward off anything that comes over them, but it’s a natural disposition in the body and the body acts like this in conformity with its disposition and its habits.’ He added: ‘Like someone who strikes with a pole<sup>295</sup> and resorts to a noise resembling our word “ah!” Though he knows it doesn’t help, he does it out of natural disposition. But God the Sublime knows best!’

[8]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of the following *ḥadīth*:

‘God the Sublime comes to the believers at the waiting place of the Resurrection in a form they don’t recognize and they seek refuge

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<sup>294</sup> *ḥalqa*: this word in the text is unclear but the general sense of the translation seems correct.

<sup>295</sup> Sense uncertain.

with God from Him, saying: "This is our place until our Lord comes to us and if He comes to us, we'll recognize Him." Then their Lord comes to them in a form they recognize, and they throw themselves down before Him.'<sup>296</sup>

'What's the meaning of the first and the second form? Ibn al-°Arabī al-Ḥātimī—God be pleased with him—says in his epistle to Fakhr al-Dīn [al-Rāzī]<sup>297</sup>—God have mercy on him: "Only the Friends of God are acquainted with this matter."<sup>298</sup>

(290) He said—God be pleased with him: "The meaning of "form" is state, of which there are two for God—He is exalted! In one state—this is the first—the believers don't recognize Him, while in the other state—this is the second one—the believers do recognize Him. Now when the lover wishes to address his beloved, along with his words lights of the compassion, tenderness and [intimate] contacts that exist between them issue from him to the beloved. On the other hand, when someone addresses an enemy, nothing of these lights emerges with his speech, but the words are naked and devoid of them. This situation is considered to be normal. Thus when the lover addresses his beloved, you'll see that his words are gentle. He's favorably disposed toward him, he's very indulgent with him and extremely expansive toward him. If he addresses his enemy, he's reserved and withdrawn. He scowls, grimaces, looks gloomy and turns away.

Now if you've grasped this, know that God the Sublime adopts the first state when He speaks to the whole Muslim community, His beloved believers as well as His enemies, the hypocrites. Then His speech is without the lights that the believers recognize as from their Lord. They recognize them as from God—He is mighty and glorious—because these lights are in their bodies and their spirits, and God has given them assistance through them in the here and now. But when they hear His speech in the first form, they seek refuge with God. They say: "You're not our Lord. For a sign exists between us and our Lord and it's the lights which accompany His speech." If they say this, He then addresses His speech—He is

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<sup>296</sup> *Faṭḥ* XIII, p. 271, no. 6573.

<sup>297</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 137, LVI; Ibn al-°Arabī died 638/1240; the *ḥadīth* isn't cited in the *Risāla*; moreover the subject is the *visio beatifica*; the text may be unreliable.

<sup>298</sup> This sentence isn't found in the printed edition of the *Risāla*.

mighty and glorious—to His special believers and limits it to them, while sending forth the lights along with the words. When the lights of speech waft over them and they perceive them, they know that He's their Lord—He is exalted—and they fall down prostrating themselves before Him. This is the second state, the one in which they recognize Him.

But God the Sublime doesn't send forth the lights with the first speech because at that time (291) the speech is directed to the whole community which also includes the enemies. In the second state He bars the enemies and addresses His words exclusively to those He loves. Then, along with the words, the lights emerge that they behold in their bodies, and they see the secrets of the lights in their exteriors as well as in their interiors.'

And I asked: 'As for the believers who don't recognize Him in the first state, who's meant by them? All the believers or the common people among them?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Only the common people among them. As for the elite who are knowers of their Lord, they're not ignorant of Him in any particular state.'

Then I said: 'Was the first speech for the whole community or for the common people?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It was only for the commoners. On the Day of Resurrection natural occurrences will be suspended. The Lord—He is exalted—will speak to a man who has laid his head on another man's lap and the man resting his head will hear but the other man will not. In short, only the person for whom it's intended will hear the speech. Everyone else will be barred from it, even if the speech is very close to the listener.'

I, al-Lama'i, would add that this is what Ibn al-°Arabī said in the epistle referred to above: 'The knowers of God aren't ignorant of Him in the first state, but only those who are barred are ignorant of Him.' These words of al-Dabbāgh are of the utmost beauty and subtlety. In them the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—combines the noble, subtle idea which minds approve with God's being above form—His majesty is majestic—and above any arriving and departing. In accordance with his explanation—God be pleased with him—there's no arriving, no departing and no form. Our Lord is above arriving and form!



As for what the shaykh al-Sha<sup>c</sup>rānī says in his book *Kashf al-rānn ‘an wujūh as’ilat al-jānn*<sup>299</sup> about the ‘form’ mentioned in this *ḥadīth*, it’s well known and let whoever reads it be on his guard against it!

Moreover, the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar in the *Sharḥ*<sup>300</sup> transmits from the *ustādh* Ibn Fūrak<sup>301</sup>—God have mercy on him—what’s close to our Shaykh’s interpretation—God be pleased with him—and if you attend to Ibn Fūrak’s words, you’ll understand the rank of our Shaykh and the awesomeness of his divine knowledge. God give us profit through him—amen!

[9]

(292) And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:

‘The heart of God’s bondsman is between two fingers of the Compassionate One.’<sup>302</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Here the finger is allegorical and stands for action which occurs through it. The meaning is: between two actions from among the actions of God the Compassionate.’

And I asked: ‘What’s meant by the two actions?’

He replied: ‘The demands of the body and the demands of the spirit. The body is derived from earth and is inclined toward lust. The spirit is created from light and is inclined toward divine insights (*ma‘ārif*) and higher realities (*ḥaqā’iq*). The two of them are continually in contradiction and conflict.’

Then I asked: ‘Which of them is dominant?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The spirit has free disposal over movements, while the body acts through innermost secrets. Thus the spirit dominates when it comes to movement, whereas the body dominates when it comes to its wicked secret. Consequently, that’s why a thankful bondsman of God is so rare. Thus the spirit and the body are like two halves of a hand mill. The spirit is like the upper half because it moves, and the body is like the lower half. But imagine boiling and fire in it so that the upper part of the hand mill is like the cover on a cooking pot. The cover influences it externally, and the

299 ‘Ibriziana’, p. 137, LVII; died 973/1565.

300 Not found in the *Fath*.

301 GAS I, p. 610; died 406/1015; see ftn. 88 above.

302 See ftn. 284 above.

pot influences the cover internally. God protect us from being overtaken by misfortune and from an evil fate!’

Then I said: ‘The religious scholars—God be pleased with them—explain the two actions as intervention of an angel and the intervention of Satan.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The angel and Satan are two secondary contingencies. What we’re explaining is the root. And that is that every body, a pure body or one that isn’t pure, has stray thoughts and these stray thoughts are what causes salvation or eternal damnation. The angel and Satan follow upon the thoughts. If the thoughts are approved [by God], the angel follows upon them and brings what’s pleasing, and if the thoughts aren’t approved, Satan follows upon them and brings what they demand. Every stray thought belongs to the body and is the body’s innermost secret. If the secret is pure, then the body is pure. Otherwise, if the secret isn’t (293) pure, the body isn’t pure. A similitude for this in the realm of the sense perceptions is: You take a measure of wheat, a measure of barley, a measure of chick-peas and a measure of broad beans, and you grind up each one separately and make a dish out of it. Then steam it in the sieve for preparing couscous (*kaskās*). If you set about reflecting on the vapor of each food, you’ll find it different from the others and you’ll find it indicates the reality of its food.

Now this is the way stray thoughts are. They have the same relation to bodies as these vapors have to foods. The matter of stray thoughts is immense and their significance momentous. Everything revolves around them, and the angel and Satan follow upon them. How many a thought has conveyed a person into the Loftiest Heights (*‘illiyyūn*), and how many a thought has conveyed a person to the lowest reaches of Hell! The thoughts that are approved [by God] are the effect of the spirit and appear in the body because of its purity. The evil thoughts are the effect of the body’s temperament and its lust. But God knows best!’

[10]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:  
‘The Black Stone is God’s right hand on His earth.’<sup>303</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘This is in the form of a simile. Whoever wishes to enter the sanctuary, the majesty, and the

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<sup>303</sup> Cf. editor’s fn., I, p. 293; *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa*, pp. 184 f.

protection of a king hastens to kiss the king's right hand. Similarly, whoever wishes to enter God's mercy and His shelter, let him kiss the Black Stone, which is for God—He is sublime—what the right hand is for the king.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that, word for word, this is what al-Ghazzālī says in his interpretation. Consult this in the chapter *al-Tafriqa*.<sup>304</sup> But God the Sublime knows best!

[11]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:  
'Death is brought in the form of a ram and is then sacrificed.'<sup>305</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This *ḥadīth* is sound. It has passed the lips of the Prophet—(294) God's blessings and peace be upon him! What's meant by it is an angel in the form of a ram which is sacrificed, thereby increasing the pleasure of the inhabitants of Paradise and the torment of the inhabitants of Hell. This is the most precious thing the angels seek. Indeed, when they prostrate themselves, they say: "Oh Lord God, make us into a blessing for your bondsmen who are believers, and a cause of mercy on their behalf!" Only an angel knows the right the believer possesses. We interpret the *ḥadīth* this way because death signifies the separation of lovers. The body returns to the earth and the spirit returns to its world. Death is the absence of contact and togetherness between them.'

He said to me—God be pleased with him: 'As for the sacrifice of an angel in the form of a ram, this is witnessed by means of deeper vision (*baṣīra*), and that's what the *ḥadīth* refers to. But God knows best!' And he said to me: 'When the people arrive in Paradise, they talk, especially during the first days, about what happened in the world and especially about the pain of death. For this reason God—He is blessed and exalted—confers on them delight and happiness by sacrificing death in the form of a ram, and what's sacrificed is an angel.'

[12]

And I heard al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—talk about the *ḥadīths* which mention the pebbles that glorify God, the yearning of the tree trunk, the stone's greeting, the prostration of the trees, and other things like this from among the Prophet's miracles—God's

<sup>304</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 138, LVIII; here a chapter in the *Iḥyā'*.

<sup>305</sup> *Faṭḥ* IX, p. 354.

blessings and peace be upon him! He said: 'They speak and glorify God this way continually. Indeed, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—asked his Lord to remove the veil from those present so they could hear this coming from these objects.'

Then I asked him: 'Are these objects endowed with life and a spirit?' He replied: 'No, they're not.'<sup>306</sup> But all created beings, those with speech and those that are mute, if asked about their creator, will reply with clear speech: "It's God Who (295) has created me!" The division of creatures into those that speak and those that are mute, into animate and inanimate, is with relation to the creatures, i.e. what they know of one another. As for their relation to the Creator—He is exalted—all of them know Him, serve Him, fear Him and are subject to Him. Inanimate beings have two directions, a direction toward their Creator—and here they're knowers of God and His submissive servants—as well as a direction toward us—and here they have no knowledge, can't hear and can't speak. This was the direction the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—asked his Lord to remove from those present so that the other direction would appear to them, the one toward the Creator—He is exalted! It was with regard to the direction toward the Creator that God the Sublime said: "There is nothing that does not proclaim His praise" (17/44).'

In this connection he answered me with the story about our lord David—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—and about the frog.<sup>307</sup> When the lord David—peace be upon him—deemed he'd greatly glorified his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—he then observed that the frog in question had glorified God during its whole life and never let up for the blinking of an eye. Thereupon our lord David—peace be upon him—deemed trivial his own situation that he'd taken to be great.

Then al-Dabbāgh said in his reply to me—God be pleased with him: 'Here our lord David—peace be upon him—beheld the state of the frog in the direction toward God—He is exalted—which is the state of the interior. In this state the glorification of God is continual without any slackening in it.'<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>306</sup> From: 'And I heard al-Dabbāgh...' cited in *Rimāh* II, p. 64, ll. 6-8.

<sup>307</sup> The story about David and the frog is found in al-Damīrī, *Hayāt* I, p. 85.

<sup>308</sup> From: 'But all created beings, those with speech and those that are mute...' cited in *Rimāh* II, p. 65, l. 7 to l. -6.

In this connection there's the story our Shaykh told us about Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj who was previously mentioned among his shaykhs—God be pleased with him, with them and with us because of them! And I heard him say—and he arranged his words for the story in his usual way—God be pleased with him: 'Verily, the earth has knowledge which it carries and which it's aware of, just as one of us knows by heart the Book of God—He is mighty and glorious—and is aware of it. In the same way every created being among inanimate things has a knowledge and it carries it.' Then I asked: 'If they're intelligent and possess knowledge, how is it that they're inanimate?'

(296) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'They're inanimate in our eyes but with relation to their Creator—He is exalted—they have knowledge of Him.' He added: 'No created thing exists, none whatsoever, that doesn't possess the words: "God is my Lord." The words pervade every creature. Similarly, no created thing exists, none whatsoever, that lacks humility before its Creator—He is exalted—as well as fear of Him, apprehension toward Him and dread of His power. People being ignorant of how matters stand with the earth and other inanimate things, they imagine they walk upon what's inanimate and that they come and go over something lifeless. It's this that ruins and destroys them.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'If people knew how matters stood with the earth, no one would ever be capable of disobeying God on the earth.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Before I received illumination I was with Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj—and he'd received illumination—and he went out with me to the hot spring in the area of Khawlān<sup>309</sup> to cut dates on the palm-trees there which are consecrated property of the tomb of Sayyidī 'Alī b. Hirzihim.' He continued: 'We walked past the well-known Dār Ibn 'Umar<sup>310</sup> outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ, one of the gates of Fez—God protect the city—and a flowing spring is located there. I took hold of a fishing hook and fixed a little bread on it. I wanted to catch some fish that are so numerous in that spring. Sayyidī Muḥammad told me not to

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<sup>309</sup> According to Leo Africanus, Khawlān is a castle located eight miles south of Fez. He notes: 'En dehors du château existe un bain d'eau très chaude'; cf. Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description I*, pp. 242 f.

<sup>310</sup> Not mentioned in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

do so but I swore an oath that I'd catch some fish. Thus he came with me to the spring and I cast the fishing hook into it. Nearby the element of water was a large stone, and I heard it say by way of crying out: "Oh God, oh God!" The spring went on flowing and soon every stone there was raising a cry, and then every fish in the place cried out except the ones that had taken the bait on the fishing hook. And they cried out: "Oh God, oh God! Have you no fear of God, oh you who are engaged in fishing?" He added: 'Straightway I was gripped by immense fear and terror. To escape from it anyone would prefer to be tied to a rope, hoisted to a high place, and fixed to a pole with an iron hook.'

I asked: 'Why did you experience such intense fear?'

He replied: 'It's as if a person has never seen a bull and never heard of one. Then his eyes are wiped clean and he finds himself in front of a huge number of bulls. What would his state be like?'

(297) I said: 'You seem to be saying that the fear that came over you was from the breach of the normal.'

'Yes, what came over me was because of beholding that breach of the normal.'

And I said: 'These words that violated what's normal, did you hear them in the Arabic language or in the language of inanimate things?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'In the language of inanimate things. They possess languages and tongues suited to their bodies and inanimate materials. Our hearing this was by means of the entire body, not only by means of the ear of the head.'

Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'This spectacle is experienced by a Friend of God during his beginning phase.<sup>311</sup> Afterwards he sees action as coming from the Creator—He is exalted—and he then sees the Creator—He is exalted—as creating in inanimate things the words, glorification and suchlike that occur in them, and he sees them as empty containers and void forms.'

I asked: 'And this isn't just in the case of these things, but he experiences this vision even in connection with Adam's offspring and other intelligent beings?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, he has this vision regarding everything without any difference.'

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<sup>311</sup> From: 'Verily, the earth has knowledge which it carries...', toward the end of (295), cited in a shortened form in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 65, l. -6 to p. 66, l. 13.

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘We’ve mentioned the state of inanimate things with regard to their knowledge of their Creator—He is exalted! Now this knowledge also belongs to the man who’s left the world of the heavens and earth and is so far removed from it that he now sees it before him like a ball. He then looks at it with a powerful, penetrating gaze. I don’t know anyone today who looks at it with this gaze except three people. If someone looks with this powerful gaze, he beholds directly what we’ve described. He sees every created being of God the Sublime among these inanimate things either prostrating itself before Him—He is mighty and glorious—or standing in fear with lowered head like someone bending forward in prayer. The first thing he sees in the posture of someone bending forward in prayer is the earth itself. But God the Sublime knows best!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘One day I was outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ in the area of the tomb of Sayyidī Aḥmad al-Yamanī<sup>312</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—sitting under an olive-tree. While I was (298) like this, suddenly all the stones, big and small, the trees and the branches, began to glorify God in their languages—He is blessed and exalted! Because of what I heard, I nearly took flight.’ He continued: ‘I began to listen to a particular stone and to hear several voices from it. I exclaimed: “There’s only one stone but several voices!” I thought about this and behold, it was an amalgam made up of several stones joined together. That’s why it had several voices.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—experienced this at the early stages of his illumination.

And similar to this is what I heard him mention—God be pleased with him—about the dumb beasts among living creatures. I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘When a bull sees another bull, he talks to him about what happened to him during his whole day and says to him: “I ate grass that was like this and that. I drank water like this and that. I had this or that particular thought.” And the other bull replies to him the same way. They talk with one another about God knows what. In their speech is division and measure, as with the letters and articulate sounds in our speech. But this is veiled from us. And the speech of all the animals, the trees and the stones is like this,

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<sup>312</sup> Not mentioned in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

just as hearing our speech with its articulate sounds and separate letters is veiled from them. They only hear it as cries and sounds. But the person whom God has given illumination hears their speech and understands its meaning. He recognizes the divisions it contains. Moreover, he understands it by means of the spirit, and the spirit knows intentions and purposes even before they're expressed. Until you've seen an illuminated person who's a non-Arab and an illuminated person who's an Arab pass their whole day talking together, the one speaking his foreign language and the other answering him in Arabic, you haven't seen anything!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'How many times I've gone to the privy to relieve myself but I then left without doing so because I heard the water [for abutions] mention God's majestic name.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that some of this was mentioned earlier in connection with knowledge of languages where we discussed the parts of science and in connection with complete fear which belongs to the parts of prophethood. But God the Sublime knows best!

[13]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth* of al-Bazzār<sup>313</sup>—transmitted from Anas [b. Mālik]—that goes back to the Prophet:

(299) 'The Israelites said to Moses: "Describe for us the word of the Lord of glory and what it was like to hear it." He replied: "I heard the sound of thunder and lightning bolts that straightway kill as if they were the sweetest delight. Such is the word of God." And Moses said: "Oh my Lord, did You speak to me with Your full speech?" He replied: "Oh Moses, I spoke to you with the power of ten thousand tongues. If I'd spoken to you with My full speech, you'd have immediately been dissolved."<sup>314</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh said to me—God be pleased with him and give us profit through his sciences: 'The meaning of the sound of thunder and lightning bolts that straightway kill is the concomitant fear that comes over someone who hears that sound. Indeed, it's a fear that's indescribable and can't be supported. Similarly, someone who hears the word of God—He is sublime and exalted—is overcome by fear and dread that grips all the parts of his body, so that every substance

<sup>313</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 298; GAS I, p. 182; died 292/905.

<sup>314</sup> Not found in *Concordance*.



of his body individually experiences the complete fear of his entire person. You'd see every one of his veins and every one of his bodily parts tremble and almost dissolve if it weren't for God's benevolence—He is blessed and exalted! And his words "sweetest sweetness" refer to the abundance of favors, mercies and benefactions Moses received at that moment and the delight his every vein experienced from hearing the pre-eternal word. And what's meant by "sound" isn't a real sound, for this is inconceivable in connection with God the Sublime. As for His words: "I spoke to you with the power of ten thousand tongues", the meaning is that God the Sublime removed the veil from Moses. Moses then heard the content of God the Sublime's word such that if it had been uttered by ten thousand tongues in a single instant, that would be the amount of what Moses heard of the content of God the Sublime's word. Moreover, this is similar to what will be described in connection with the person who receives illumination, namely that the sounds don't become confused and hearing one thing doesn't distract him from hearing something else. On that occasion if you suppose ten thousand tongues directed at Moses, his hearing would take them in and he'd understand them in an instant without succession and priority [among the words]. That then is what the *ḥadīth* refers to.'

And he added: 'This is the hearing of the spirit, not the hearing of the body. Indeed, the science of the spirit doesn't contain ordered succession. If, for example, the spirit directs its attention to a particular science such as grammar or jurisprudence, all the latter's questions are present unto the spirit in one instant. And it's the same with the spirit's recitation. If it wishes to recite the noble Qur'ān, it recites it with all its letters and with mastery of its articulations and peculiarities in a single instant.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, heard this answer from him—God be pleased with him—during his beginning. I was sitting in the 'Ayn 'Allūn Mosque<sup>315</sup> with *al-Durr al-manthūr fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi'l-l-ma'thūr*<sup>316</sup> in my hand. In it I came across (300) this *ḥadīth*. I then said to myself: 'I wish the Shaykh were present so I could ask him about its meaning.' Then only a short time passed and he came to

<sup>315</sup> Not mentioned in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

<sup>316</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 138, LIX; by al-Suyūṭī; the *ḥadīth* couldn't be found in the *Durr manthūr*.

me—God be pleased with him—and sat down before me. I opened the book and said: ‘Oh Sayyidī, I wanted to ask you about a *ḥadīth* in this book.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘For my part, I’ve come to you in order to give you the answer. So ask me!’ I then mentioned the *ḥadīth* to him, and he presented the response given above—God be pleased with him and give us profit through his sciences!

[14]

And I heard him give a reply—God be pleased with him—about the Prophet’s words—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘Gabriel was only concealed from me this time’—as it appears in Muslim<sup>317</sup> where Muslim presents Gabriel’s *ḥadīth* and Gabriel asks about faith (*īmān*) and doing good (*iḥsān*). And the Prophet said: ‘Bring back the questioner’, and they looked for him. And then the Prophet said: ‘That was Gabriel who was concealed from me this time.’

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘In this concealment is contained more veneration and honor on behalf of our Prophet and more reverence for his high rank—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—than can be sustained, and only someone on whom God the Sublime has bestowed mercy knows of it. Indeed, the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—on certain occasions may experience immersion while beholding God—He is exalted—and his body with all its ties and its infatuation, all its veins and bodily parts, and the floods of its light, becomes absorbed in the light of God the Sublime. Thus it remains detached from everything other than God, and yet it’s protected. It does nothing but what’s true and speaks nothing but the truth. If the angels see that this state has come over the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and they know no one else among God’s creatures can sustain this—He is mighty and glorious—and they know he won’t recognize them on this occasion—blessings and peace be upon him—they hasten to exploit the state. They ask him questions about faith and acquire faith from him, and they take him as their authoritative guide (*shaykh*) regarding faith. Thus the angel, having come before him in the form of a bedouin, says to him: “Oh Apostle of God, I’ve come here to believe in you and to confirm my faith in you. Therefore

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<sup>317</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 135, XXXVIII; Muslim died 261/875.

teach me how to believe in God and His Apostle.” And the Prophet then teaches him.’

I asked: ‘Why do they learn faith from him and acquire it from him? After all, they’re the honored servants of God and His closest angels.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The rank of our Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is immense, and whoever acquires faith from him and doesn’t change won’t look upon the path [suspended over Hell] and Hell-fire. So the angels take advantage of the occasion.’

(301) ‘And why do they only ask him questions when he’s in this state?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘If he’s returned to his senses—peace be upon him—and recognizes them as angels, and they know he recognizes them, under these circumstances it isn’t really possible for them to present themselves as bedouins, so that the answer comes forth for them from his noble body with his light and his assistance. This is in contrast to when he’s absorbed in God the Sublime and his body only listens to the speaker’s speech and words. The answer then comes forth in the desired way.’

And I asked: ‘Can the angels recognize the state in which he’s returned to his senses—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the state in which he’s absorbed in God the Sublime?’

He replied to me—God be pleased with him: ‘This isn’t concealed from them, nor concealed from a person whose deeper vision has been opened by God. But God the Sublime knows best!’

[15]

And I heard him comment about the following *ḥadīth*—God be pleased with him:

‘Every prophet was given some [miracles] on the basis of which human beings would acquire faith. But what I’ve been given is revelation which is recited.’<sup>318</sup>

[He said:] ‘The evidentiary miracles of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—corresponded to their kind of bodies and what’s connected with them. Some miracles were bestowed on them after they’d grown up. And some miracles were raised along with their bodies during childhood and then manifested themselves in

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<sup>318</sup> *Faṭḥ* XV, p. 433, in a different form; see also *Concordance* I, p. 275.

adulthood. The miracle of our Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—came from God the Sublime and from His light, from beholding Him (*mushāhada*) and talking with Him. This was because of the Prophet’s strength—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—with regard to his body, reason, carnal soul, spirit and innermost secret. Indeed, had his vision (*mushāhada*)—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—been given to all the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—they couldn’t have supported it. This is why he said: “What I was given is revelation which is recited”, i.e. his miracle isn’t the same kind as their miracles, even if their miracles attained so eminent and momentous a degree that on their basis and because of them human beings would acquire faith. The Prophet’s miracles—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—are above all this because they come from God the Sublime, not from himself.’

Then he presented a similitude—God be pleased with him: ‘There was a king and every time he had a son, he sent him to a particular place to be raised. Likewise, with each son he sent some precious item such as a ruby, by which he might be known and recognized as a king’s son. Then it happened that he had a son and he let him stay (302) with him. He set about raising him himself and looked after all his affairs. It’s indescribable the extent to which this son received perfect knowledge and perfect diffusion within him of his father’s secret (*sirr*). What his brothers received of the king’s secret can’t be compared in any way with what he received!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘One of the Companions wished to see some miracles of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—take place on behalf of [our] Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! The Prophet turned his attention to this—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the Companion came to see the extent to which the generous Master had distinguished the Prophet and he felt ashamed.’

Al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—presented a similitude [for the situation]: ‘The king gave someone power over his whole kingdom and a free hand to do whatever he pleased in it. One of the person’s companions then proceeds to wish that the person in question be given a village to dispose over.’

Another time I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The secrets and the lights contained in the Qur’ān, and the stations it

includes and the states it comprises, are like the following. Someone makes a suit of clothing to measure. It consists of a cap, a shirt, a turban and whatever one wears. And he puts it on him (the Prophet).<sup>319</sup> If you look at the suit of clothing and you then look at all created beings, you realize that nothing has the capacity to wear it and support it except the body of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And that's because of the power with which God has distinguished his noble body.'

Another time I heard him say by way of explaining that the Prophet's vision (*mushāhada*)—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is unbearable [for anyone else]: 'Vision depends on the degree of one's divine knowledge (*ma'rifa*).<sup>320</sup> Now the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—received divine knowledge at the time that the lover was with the beloved and no third party accompanied them. Indeed, he is the first of created beings—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Yonder his noble spirit was given to drink of the sanctified lights and Lordly insights by means of which it became the foundation for every seeker and the substance for every learner. Then when his noble spirit entered his pure body, it settled down in contentment, love and acceptance. It proceeded to provide its secrets to the body and to confer its divine insights on it. And the body advanced in ascents and divine insights, stage after stage, from the time of his childhood—God's blessings and peace be upon him—until he attained the age of forty. At that time the curtain between the body and the spirit disappeared and the veil between them vanished completely. He then received vision that can't be supported—God's blessings and peace be upon him—so that he came to behold, as if directly before his eyes, that God the Sublime is the mover (*muḥarrik*) of all created beings. He transfers them from one domain to another, while the created beings are like containers and earthenware vessels. In themselves they possess no benefit and no harm. Then God the Sublime sent him—while endowed with this vision, and in his eyes created beings were empty bodies and void forms—(303) to be a mercy unto them. He didn't see their action as coming from themselves so that he might invoke God against them and they might perish, the way the prophets before him—blessings

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<sup>319</sup> The narrative is unclear.

<sup>320</sup> An old idea: vision in the hereafter depends on the knowledge of God one acquired on earth; on this point see NkG, p. 71.

and peace be upon them—had done to their communities. That's why these prophets were quick in raising their invocations, whereas our Prophet's invocation—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has been deferred as intercession until the Day of Resurrection. Thus his invocation is mercy upon mercy, and has proven to be a corroboration of God the Sublime's words:

"We have only sent you as a mercy unto all beings" (21/107). And it's a corroboration of the Prophet's words—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "Verily, I am a mercy sent to creation!"

And this was at the very beginning of his vision—God's blessings and peace be upon him! At every instant he was advancing and ascending in his stations which are beyond description.'

[I, al-Lamaʿī, asked:] 'Is there anything higher than this?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'If our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—had lived up to our present time, he wouldn't have halted in his ascent, for there's no limit to the perfections of our Master—He is exalted!'

Then I said: 'But the [other] prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—didn't lack the vision in question, since if they only possessed faith in the invisible world to the effect that God the Sublime is the Creator both of us and of our actions, they'd be on the level of ordinary believers.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Without a doubt they received vision, but the curtain didn't disappear completely, whereas in the vision of our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—it did disappear completely.'

Then al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—spoke forth unveiled higher truths and subtle points of divine insight that minds are barred from grasping. Finally he said—God be pleased with him: 'The noble Qurʾān contains an amount of sanctified lights and Lordly insights and pre-eternal secrets that can't be sustained. If our lord Moses, who brought the Torah, and our lord Jesus, who brought the Gospels, and our lord David, who brought the Psalms, had lived up to the time of the Qurʾān and had heard it, their only choice would have been to follow the Qurʾān and to imitate the Prophet in his words and to be guided by his actions—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Surely, they'd have been the first to respond to his call, to believe in him, and to fight with the sword in front of him.'

(304) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that a *ḥadīth* with the same meaning as these words has come down from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—which says:

'If Moses and Jesus were still alive, they'd follow me.' Or however he may have put it—blessings and peace be upon him! Consult Ibn Ḥajar at the end of his chapter *al-Tawḥīd*<sup>321</sup> where he discusses at length the chains of transmission of this *ḥadīth*. If it weren't that it's extraneous to the purpose of this book, I'd have presented it here. But God knows best and is wisest regarding what's hidden in this matter!

[16]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the Prophet's words—God's blessings and peace be upon him:

'By God, I will not provide you with mounts. I have no mounts with me to give you.'<sup>322</sup>

[I said:] 'He's addressing the Ash'arites.<sup>323</sup> Then after that he did provide them with mounts—blessings and peace be upon him! But the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—only tells the truth and only speaks in sincerity.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—only speaks in sincerity and only tells the truth. However, his words—God's blessings and peace be upon him—come forth in accordance with his interior and his vision. Sometimes he experiences vision (*mushāhada*) of the Lofty Essence (*al-dhāt al-ʿaliyya*) and in this vision is a pleasure so great it's indescribable and can't be sustained. Nothing in the world resembles it. This is the pleasure enjoyed in Paradise by the inhabitants of Paradise. Other times he experiences a vision of the divine Essence (*al-dhāt*) and its power and the sway of its force. In this vision is fear and disturbance caused by the vision of power and the sway of force. And in both these visions he's absent from human beings and doesn't see anyone from among them.' Something has been said about this earlier in connection with the *ḥadīth*: 'Gabriel was only concealed from me...' You may consult that.<sup>324</sup>

<sup>321</sup> Not found in *Concordance* or the *Faṭḥ*; it occurs in a different form in al-Qārī, *Mawḍūʿāt*, p. 292.

<sup>322</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 515; *Faṭḥ* XIII, p. 362, no. 6623.

<sup>323</sup> Cf. Arabic works dealing with *nisbas*, e.g. *Ansāb* I, p. 173.

<sup>324</sup> See section [14] in this chapter.

[He continued:] ‘Still other times he experiences a vision of the power of divine Essence with contingent things and he beholds the power diffused throughout contingent things. In this vision the Lofty Essence is absent from his interior but its actions remain. And in this third vision obedience to the prescriptions of the *sharī‘a* occurs, as well as instructing mankind and causing them to reach the truth. Everything the Prophet utters—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is contained within these kinds of vision. Sometimes he experiences the first kind, other times the second, still other times the third kind. The above-mentioned *ḥadīth* emerged while he was experiencing the second kind. And the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—(305) was absent in the vision of the Essence and its power. Indeed, he was absent from himself, to say nothing of other things. So when they said to him: “Oh Apostle of God, provide us with mounts” and they came upon him in this vision, he replied to them:

“By God, I will not provide you with mounts. I have no mounts with me to give you.”

And these were true words. But when he returned to the vision of existing things and that arrival of camels took place,<sup>325</sup> he acted in accordance with this kind of vision and what it requires. He followed [God’s] orders and looked after the right of the people. He then said: “Where are the Ash‘arites?” They were summoned, and he bestowed [mounts] on them. They said: “Oh Apostle of God, you swore an oath that you wouldn’t bestow [mounts] on us but now you’ve bestowed [them] on us.” He replied to them as was necessary—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—that his first oath was as required by the kind of vision he was experiencing at the time. Then he said: “It isn’t I who’ve provided you with mounts but God has given them to you.”

That is to say: “I swore an oath that I wouldn’t provide you with mounts and that I have no mounts to give you. And this is so. The one who’s given you mounts is God the Sublime, not I.” And this indicates how he only told the truth and only spoke in sincerity.’

[17]

And I said: ‘Why did he renounce his oath—blessings and peace be upon him—the time that he said:

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<sup>325</sup> According to the *ḥadīth* under discussion, newly captured camels were unexpectedly put at the Prophet’s disposal.



“Should I swear an oath but then see something better than it, I renounce my oath and do what’s better.”<sup>326</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—didn’t renounce his oath in this story. What he states afterwards in the *ḥadīth* is the beginning of what he wants to say, the basis for a judgement and the laying down of a legal principle. The Prophet didn’t renounce his oath at all in this story—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this was the view of the greatest of the eminent authorities such as al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and others. How sound is the divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*) of this great shaykh!

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Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘The similitude for this first kind of vision, about which we said it’s like the pleasure the inhabitants of Paradise experience, is a king who’s known for his power and force. He bears a weapon and an implement for killing, as well as (306) other fear-inspiring things. The king then puts aside his weapon and lays down his implement for killing. He dismounts from his horse and calls a man from his kingdom. He begins to be expansive with him and gives himself over to the accessories of joy and merriment with him. And he proceeds in this with him to the utmost extreme, until he sleeps with him in the same suit of clothes. Would that I knew how much joy this man experienced! Can anyone measure its full extent or any description attain its true nature? This is a similitude which is capable of expressing the vision figuratively, as long as one affirms that the vision is remote from the similitude—a remoteness which has no proximity to it in kind or in circumstance.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The one who’s endowed with this vision experiences calm and composure, high spirits and cheerful expansiveness, while the pleasure it brings is diffused throughout his veins, his flesh and blood, his bones and his hair, his skin and all the substances of his body. If we were to imagine taking one of his hairs and looking at the pleasure it contained, we’d find it was equal to the pleasure in his reason and in his heart. It wouldn’t have less pleasure than both of them have. And were we to represent the finest pleasure in the world—which is that of sexual

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<sup>326</sup> Not found in *Concordance*.

intercourse—as one part out of six hundred thousand multiplied by a thousand multiplied again by a thousand, and were we to fix the total of these parts as one of seventy thousand parts, and then the total of this as one tenth of the pleasure in question, it would in no way approximate the pleasure of this vision.’

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘The similitude for the second kind of vision is that of someone who rebels against the king but then encounters him with his weapon and his power and his force. Although something of the previous pleasure occurs in this vision, it’s accompanied by unbearable fear and terror. As for the person who beholds the king on his horse while the king brandishes his spear and makes threatening gestures with it, don’t even ask about the terror this person experiences!’

He added: ‘The first kind of vision is accompanied by something like sleep and the second kind is accompanied by wakefulness because of the disturbance that occurs when one sees the force and power of divine Essence (*dhāt*).’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The third kind of vision is what’s referred to in the Prophet’s words—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Verily, there’s a veil upon my heart. I seek forgiveness from God.”’<sup>327</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this *ḥadīth* is presented by Muslim in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* and the authorities on *ḥadīths* have discussed it. The views of ‘Iyāḍ,<sup>328</sup> al-Nawawī and al-‘Irāqī<sup>329</sup>—God have mercy on them—are close to what our Shaykh has said—God be pleased with him—but the Shaykh’s words—God be pleased with him—are those of someone who beholds and sees directly.

(307) He said—God be pleased with him: ‘No created being has the capacity to sustain the first and second kind of vision continuously. It’s necessary for them to descend to the third vision to find repose. But whenever the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—descended to it, he asked God for forgiveness, considering this to be a sin.’ As for other secrets which the Shaykh revealed—God be pleased with him—it isn’t possible to divulge them.

<sup>327</sup> *Concordance* V, p. 38.

<sup>328</sup> See fn. 234 above; cf. *Shifā’* II, p. 343.

<sup>329</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 138, LXI; died 806/1404; see also al-Sakhāwī, *Faṭḥ al-mughhīth*, *Sharḥ Alfīyyat al-ḥadīth li’l-‘Irāqī*.

When I heard about these three kinds of vision from him and he said: 'The Prophet's speech—blessings and peace be upon him—doesn't exceed these; and his words aren't difficult—blessings and peace be upon him—except for someone who's unfamiliar with these visions; and he only tells the truth—blessings and peace be upon him—and he only speaks in sincerity in all his affairs and in all his states':

[18]

I asked him about things I found difficult to understand in *ḥadīths*. Thus I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth* on pollinating palm-trees which is found in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of Muslim:<sup>330</sup> The Prophet walked past some people who were pollinating palm-trees. And he said—blessings and peace be upon him:

'What's this?' They replied: 'This way they turn out well, oh Apostle of God.' And he said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'If you didn't do it, they'd [still] turn out well.' So they didn't pollinate them. But they turned out to be dates of bad quality. After this when he saw the dates—blessings and peace be upon him—he said: 'Why are the dates like this?' They replied: 'Oh Apostle of God, it was you who told us such-and-such.' He then said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'You know better how to deal with your worldly affairs.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet's remark—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "If you didn't do it, they'd [still] turn out well", consists of true and sincere words. He uttered these words on the basis of his firm conviction and certainty that God the Sublime is the only active agent. This certain assertion is based on beholding the diffusion of God the Sublime's action throughout all contingent beings—directly and not by means of an intermediary or a secondary cause. Not one mote comes to rest, not one hair moves, no heart beats, no vein pulsates, no eye blinks and no eyebrow makes a sign without God the Sublime being the agent behind it—directly without any intermediary. And this is something which the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—perceives the way others experience all sense perceptions. Nor is this hidden from his sight, whether he's in a waking state or (308) asleep, because when it comes to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace

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<sup>330</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 1.

be upon him—his heart which contains this vision doesn't sleep. Without any doubt secondary causes are removed from the sight of someone endowed with this vision, and he advances from faith in what's invisible to seeing and direct vision. In conformity with God's word—He is blessed and exalted: "And God created you and what you do" (37/96), he possesses permanent vision which is never absent and the certainty which corresponds to this kind of vision. He's so absolutely sure of the sense of this Qur'ānic verse that it would never enter his mind to ascribe an action to anyone other than God the Sublime, even if the thought were as small as the head of an ant. Without any doubt, a firm conviction of this description causes normal behavior to be interrupted (miracles) and has an influence on things. This is God the Sublime's secret due to which no secondary cause remains and no intermediary. When a person who has attained this station indicates that there are no secondary causes and attributes action to the Lord of lords, what he says is true and his words are sincere. But the person who has faith in the invisible doesn't possess vision in conformity with: "And God created you and what you do."

Rather what he sees he attributes to the person by whose hand the actions appear to have been done. Only the faith which God the Sublime bestows on him will draw him to the sense of the Qur'ānic verse and cause him to attribute action to God—He is exalted! He has two attractions within him. One is from his Lord, and this is the faith which draws him to God. The second of them is from his natural temperament, and this is to see action as coming from other than God, which draws him into falsehood. He's continually between these two matters. Sometimes the pull of faith is stronger and you find that he visualizes the sense of the mentioned Qur'ānic verse for one or two hours. At other times the pull of his natural temperament is stronger and you find that he neglects its sense for one or two days. During the times of neglect the certainty which interrupts normal behavior disappears. That's why what the Prophet said—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't happen, because the Companions—God be pleased with them—lacked the certainty which interrupts normal behavior and which the Prophet's interior contains—God's blessings and peace be upon him! It was in accordance with this certainty that his true speech and sincere words emerged. Since he knew what stopped what he said from happening—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and he knew

that they didn't have it in their power to remove the cause—God be pleased with them—he left them the way they were, saying: “You know better how to deal with your worldly affairs.”

I, al-Lamaṭī, say: Just look! And God give you success! Have you ever heard an answer such as this? Or seen something like it written in a book? And this *ḥadīth* is difficult for the eminent authorities among the scholars of the foundations of jurisprudence and for others, men such as (309) Jamāl al-Dīn b. al-Ḥājib,<sup>331</sup> Sayf al-Dīn al-Āmidī,<sup>332</sup> Ṣafī al-Dīn al-Hindī<sup>333</sup> and Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī—God the Sublime have mercy on them!

[19]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:

‘When the call to prayer is sounded, Satan takes flight and breaks wind.’<sup>334</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Verily, he flees because when the call to prayer comes forth from a pure body, its light fills all the empty space that the sound of the call to prayer reaches. Light is cold, whereas Satan was created from the smokeless flame of a fire. And cold and fire are opposites.’

This is similar to the following that I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The Jinn in Hell aren’t tormented by fire because fire is their nature—“by fire” here means burning fire. Since fire is their nature, it doesn’t do them any harm. Rather they’re tormented by cold and bitter frost (*zamharīr*),<sup>335</sup> i.e. cold fire. In the world the Jinn have a terrible fear of the cold. You can see them during the summer when they’re in the air how they fear the wafting of cool breezes. If the wind blows, they take flight like wild onagers. Nor will the Jinn and satans ever enter water. If it were decreed that one of them enter water, he’d be extinguished and dissolve, the way one of us would burn up and dissolve if he entered a fire.’

He said: ‘If it isn’t clear to you what the Jinn are like, observe a very murky fire which is thick (310) with smoke, like the fire of potters. In it picture their form in accordance with which they were

<sup>331</sup> See fn. 58 above.

<sup>332</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 138, LXII; died 631/1233.

<sup>333</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 138, LXIII; died 715/1315.

<sup>334</sup> *Concordance* III, p. 508.

<sup>335</sup> Cf. Qurʾān 76/13.

created. When you've clothed the said form with that murky smoke, this is what the Jinn are like. But God the Sublime knows best!

[20]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*:

'[While] in the presence of (*'inda*) my Lord, I didn't want Him to give me food and drink.'<sup>336</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Here "in the presence of" signifies "with" (*ma'a*), and by food and drink is meant God the Sublime's strengthening His Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

Then I asked: 'Is it enough for the body which is made from earth to taste lights? Doesn't it need food as well?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It isn't enough for it. Were we to suppose that a man went to one of the prophets and barred him from food and drink, the said prophet would die. This body made from earth can't do without nourishment that arises from the earth. That's why you see prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—eating and drinking, and feeling hungry and being sated. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[21]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was born at night. This is the view of one group and as proof of it they present the *ḥadīth* of °Uthmān b. Abī°I-°Āṣ<sup>337</sup>—from his mother Fāṭima bt. °Abd Allāh al-Thaqafiyya<sup>338</sup> who said:

'I witnessed the birth of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and I saw the house in which his birth took place fill with light and I saw the stars draw so near I thought they were about to fall on me.'

(311) This is transmitted by al-Bayhaqī<sup>339</sup> and Ibn al-Sakan.<sup>340</sup> Now aren't there stars only at night?

Or was the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—born during the daytime? There are those who hold this to be true and as proof they present the *ḥadīth* of Muslim and others. But [in

<sup>336</sup> *Concordance* III, p. 547.

<sup>337</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 310.

<sup>338</sup> On her and her testimony see *Usd* VII, p. 228, no. 7181.

<sup>339</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 138, LXV; died 458/1066.

<sup>340</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 138, LXVI; died 353/964.

their view] the birth took place after dawn as in one *ḥadīth*, even if it's weak. After all, weak *ḥadīths* can be used with regard to the Prophet's virtues and outstanding qualities. And their answer to the previous *ḥadīth* is that the stars are visible after dawn and so the previous *ḥadīth* isn't evidence that the Prophet's birth was at night before dawn.

He replied—God be pleased with him—and he imparted secrets to me from his noble body: 'The actual truth and the fact of the matter is that the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—was born at the end of the night a certain space of time before dawn, and his mother hadn't expelled the placenta until dawn had arisen. The space of time between his being separated from his mother's womb—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the expulsion of the placenta is the moment when prayers are answered in the night. *Ḥadīths* have been handed down regarding this moment which aggrandize its importance and tell of its awesomeness and that its effect will extend up to the Resurrection.

It's at that moment that the people of the *Dīwān*<sup>341</sup> of the Friends of God the Sublime assemble from all quarters of the earth. Among them is the Support (*al-ghawth*) and the seven Pivots (*al-aqtāb*), as well as "the people of the circle and the number"—God be pleased with them all! Their gathering takes place in the Cave of *Ḥirā'* outside Mecca, and they're the bearers of Islam's pillar of light. The entire Muslim community benefits from them. Anyone whose invocation coincides with their invocation and whose standing erect coincides with their standing erect at this hour, God will answer his request and accomplish his desire.'

Al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—often indicated that we should rise at this hour and he said: 'Dawn arrives in Mecca before it arrives in the city of Fez. In your rising observe the dawn of Mecca and act in conformity with it.' I asked him how much earlier dawn arrived in Mecca than in the city of Fez. He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Dawn arrives in Mecca a little before Ibn Ḥamū, the muezzin of the Qarawiyyīn [Mosque], rises.' And I asked: 'Then the hour is the time between when al-Wardī rises and al-Salāwī<sup>342</sup> after him?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, that's right.'

<sup>341</sup> The *Dīwān al-ṣāliḥīn*: the supernatural Council of the godly who assemble in circles and numbered rows; see Chapter Four.

<sup>342</sup> Two muezzins: the one rises before dawn in Mecca, the other just after.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that before I met al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—I used to recite the last part of the surah *The Cave*: (312) ‘Verily, for those who believe and do good deeds there will be gardens of Paradise and they will dwell there forever and will want no change of place’ (18/107)—to the end of the surah. I did this in order to wake up at the hour when prayers are answered. I continued to do this for about sixteen years. For the most part I woke up at the time of al-Wardī but on some occasions I woke up at the time of al-Salāwī after him.

And I heard something similar from a group interested in the matter of this blessed hour and who lived somewhere else than the city of Fez. They said: ‘We only rose at the end of the night, a little while before dawn.’ They meant dawn in their country. But God knows best!

[22]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the month of the Prophet’s birth<sup>343</sup>—blessings and peace be upon him! There’s great disagreement about this among religious scholars. Some of them say it was the month of Ṣafar, others Rabī<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Ākhar. Some of them say Rajab, others Ramaḍān, still others the Day of ‘Āshūrā’. And there are those who say that the month is undetermined, i.e. unknown to us—not that it’s undetermined in reality.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The month in question is Rabī<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Awwal.’

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the day of the Prophet’s birth during the month of Rabī<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Awwal. On this point the religious scholars disagree—God be pleased with them! Some say: on the second of the month. And some say: on the seventh of the month—which is the day most of them prefer. Others say: on the eighth of the month. And still others say: on the ninth and on the twelfth.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘He was born—blessings and peace be upon him—on the 7th of Rabī<sup>ʿ</sup> al-Awwal.’ This is the actual fact of the matter, i.e. he was born on the night of the seventh of the month—in accordance with what was previously discussed that he was born at night.

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<sup>343</sup> For sources that deal with the Prophet’s life cf. EI, s.v. Muḥammad.



[23]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the year of the Prophet's birth. The religious scholars disagree about this as well—God be pleased with them! Some say the Year of the Elephant<sup>344</sup> began fifty days after his birth. And some say it was fifty-five months after his birth. Others say it was forty months later. Still others say it was ten years later, and some even say it was fifteen years later.

(313) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Rather he was born in the Year of the Elephant before the elephant's arrival, and through the blessing of his presence in Mecca—God's blessings and peace be upon him—God drove off the elephant from Mecca's inhabitants.' I didn't ask him by how much his birth preceded the arrival of the elephant, but had I done so—God be pleased with him—he'd have specified it precisely. If you'd heard him at the time that he undertook these answers, you'd have heard the greatest of God's miracles. But God the Sublime knows best!

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the length of time the Prophet's [mother] was pregnant with him—blessings and peace be upon him!

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The time of [her] pregnancy with him was ten months.'

[24]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether the Prophet's noble armpits contained hair or not.<sup>345</sup> Indeed, on this point the religious scholars also disagree. But it would take too long for us to present what they say.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet's noble armpits had no hair that could be plucked but they contained something very small which was *ʿufra*, i.e. whiteness mixed with a little black. The cause of this lack of hair under his noble armpits was that his hair grew up to the top of his noble chest and shoulders. In these two noble places he was hairy. For this reason there was little hair under his armpits. But God the Sublime knows best!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I hadn't understood what's found in some reports that the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—

<sup>344</sup> The year Abraha attacked Mecca with elephants; see ftn. 185 above.

<sup>345</sup> On the Prophet's hair see *Shamā'il*, pp. 19-22; and *Concordance I*, p. 2.

had hair on his shoulders, until I heard these illuminated words from our Shaykh—God have mercy on us through him!

[25]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—had joined eyebrows, as in some reports, or whether his eyebrows weren't joined, as in other reports.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—didn't have eyebrows that were joined together.'<sup>346</sup>

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the Prophet's way of walking—God's blessings and peace be upon him—whether he swayed to the right and to the left, as in some reports. Or did he lean forward as indicated in one report: 'As if he were descending a hillside.'<sup>347</sup>

He replied to me—God be pleased with him: 'He swayed to the right and the left.'

I was with him in a place without a third person present, and he said to me—God be pleased with him: 'Come! I'll (314) show you the way the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—used to walk in the House of the world while he was still alive.' And he walked ahead of me about sixty steps—God be pleased with him—and I saw how he swayed to the right and the left. I beheld a walk which was so fine and beautiful that I almost lost my reason. Never had my eye seen a walk more beautiful and more dazzling to minds. God be pleased with him! How true is his knowledge of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[26]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the Prophet's noble beard, since there are divergent reports about this subject.<sup>348</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—had a beard that was thick throughout its length, of medium length at the chin, and rather thin where the cheeks meet with the chin. But God the Sublime knows best!'

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<sup>346</sup> Unidentified

<sup>347</sup> On the Prophet's manner of walking see *Shamā'il*, p. 60.

<sup>348</sup> See *Concordance* V, p. 542; and also WKAS s.v. *kathth*.

[27]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the Prophet's noble hair since there are divergent reports on the subject, and about his noble white hair and his noble dye, and whether he used a depilatory paste (*nawra*)—blessings and peace be upon him!<sup>349</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The noble hair of his head—God's blessings and peace be upon him—varied. Occasionally it was long, occasionally it was short. It wasn't one way all the time. But where it encroached on his forehead he did trim it and wouldn't let it become long—blessings and peace be upon him! And he didn't shave his head—blessings and peace be upon him—except when performing pious austerities. There were about five white hairs on his lower lip, and a little white hair on his temples. His chin had more than this. And the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—did dye his hair with henna but only rarely—when he entered Mecca and a few times in Medina. And he used *nawra* on his midriff. Khadija and ʿĀʾisha—God be pleased with them—applied *nawra* on him. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[28]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about how often the Prophet's noble chest had been split open. The *ḥadīths* disagree on this subject.<sup>350</sup>

(315) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Three times:

1) While he was with Ḥalīma.<sup>351</sup> Satan's allotment was removed and this is what the earthen body demands in the way of disobeying a command and following one's passion. 2) When he was ten years old. The root of bad thoughts was extracted from him. 3) When he'd become a prophet.'

I didn't ask him about what was extracted at that time. Outwardly most [relevant] *ḥadīths* seem to indicate that it happened on the night of the Ascension. Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'But this isn't the case.' He went on to say: 'The splitting open of his breast took place without an instrument and without [shedding] blood. Moreover, the closing up of his chest occurred without sewing and without an instrument. Nor did he experience any pain

<sup>349</sup> See *Concordance* VII, p. 20.

<sup>350</sup> Cf. Birkeland, 'The Legend', pp. 5 ff., that deals with the three occasions.

<sup>351</sup> Muḥammad's wet nurse; cf. EI, s.n. Ḥalīma.

during this—blessings and peace be upon him—because it was of the Lord’s doing—He is sublime! But God knows best!’

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that the splitting open of his chest while he was with Ḥalīma is broadly agreed upon. As for this happening when he was ten years old, a *ḥadīth* of Abū Hurayra—God be pleased with him—has been handed down which ʿAbd Allāh b. al-Imām Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] cites in the *Zawāʿid al-Musnad*.<sup>352</sup>

As for the splitting open of his chest during prophethood, i.e. at the beginning of his mission, this is mentioned by Abū Dāwūd Ṭayālīsī in his *Musnad*, and by Abū Nuʿaym,<sup>353</sup> as well as by al-Bayhaqī in the *Dalāʾil al-nubuwwa*.<sup>354</sup>

As for it having occurred during the Ascension, there are some who deny it. They say: ‘This has only been handed down in one report, that of Sharīk b. ʿAbd Allāh b. Abī Nimr al-Madani,<sup>355</sup> but his report is rejected (*munkar*).’ Ibn Ḥajar says: ‘The truth is it’s firmly established in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* by others besides Sharīk, for instance as a *ḥadīth* of Abū Dharr.’ You may consult (316) Ibn Ḥajar at the end of the chapter *al-Tawḥīd*.<sup>356</sup> But you know that the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was unschooled (*ummī*) and his words are based on pure unveiling and direct vision. What’s correct is that the splitting open of the Prophet’s chest didn’t take place during the Ascension. But God the Sublime knows best!

[29]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the following which has been said: ‘His index finger—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—was longer than his middle finger.’<sup>357</sup> And he replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The second toe of his foot was longer than his middle toe, but the index finger of his hands was the same size as his middle finger. But God the Sublime knows best!’

[30]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about Gabriel embracing the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—three times when he came to him saying: ‘Recite in the name of your

352 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 139, LXVII; died 290/903.

353 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 139, LXVIII; died 430/1038; cf. his *Dalāʾil*, p. 69.

354 See fn. 339 above; ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 139, LXIX; his *Dalāʾil* II, p. 142.

355 TT IV, p. 337, no. 578, died after 140/757.

356 *Faṭḥ* XV, p. 448, no. 7517.

357 See *Concordance* II, p. 389.

Lord!' (96/1). And the Prophet replied—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'I'm not able to recite.' And Gabriel embraced the Prophet with all his might.<sup>358</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The first embrace was in order to bring him before God—He is blessed and exalted—and obtain God's eternal contentment with him after which there's no wrath. The second embrace was so that he, i.e. Gabriel, might be included in the dignity of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and find refuge in his noble protection. And the third embrace was so that he, i.e. Gabriel, would belong to the Prophet's noble community.' And he added—God be pleased with him: 'And the words of Gabriel—peace be upon him—to the Prophet: "Recite!", signify: "Convey the uncreated (*qadīm*) by means of the contingent (*ḥādīth*).'" Then the whole of the Qur'ān was sent down to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—in that place. And this is the meaning of God the Sublime's words:

"The month of Ramaḍān when the Qur'ān was sent down as guidance for the people and as clear signs of guidance and discrimination" (2/185).'

And he went on: 'Verily, Gabriel asked him to convey the uncreated meanings and the pre-eternal speech especially addressed to him at that moment—blessings and peace be upon him! And the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—replied to him: "I'm not able to recite", i.e. I'm unable to impart the uncreated word and pre-eternal speech with the contingent (317) tongue. Gabriel then taught him how to impart it with the contingent tongue. For this reason the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—loved him very dearly.'

Then the Shaykh spoke on this subject such things as dazzled our minds—God be pleased with him—and he went on talking for almost a day. What he said contained secrets which it isn't permitted to write down. But God the Sublime knows best!

[31]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the *ḥadīth*: 'There you [all] are this night of yours! [But after a hundred years no one who is now on the face of the earth will be left.]'<sup>359</sup>

<sup>358</sup> *Sīra* I, pp. 252 f.

<sup>359</sup> *Concordance* VI, p. 161; in Muslim's *Ṣaḥīḥ*.

In this *ḥadīth* the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—indicates the end of this age after one hundred years.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—spoke this *ḥadīth* shortly before his death and these are words from his eminent spirit to comfort and console his noble body, since he knew that his death was near. Thus the spirit spoke this hidden secret so the body might find consolation.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that al-Dabbāgh was right when he said: ‘The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—spoke this *ḥadīth* before his death.’ Indeed, in his *Ṣaḥīḥ* Muslim reports from Jābir<sup>360</sup>—God be pleased with him—that this was one month before the Prophet’s death—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

What an outstanding unschooled imam! How well he knows the nature of Muṣṭafā—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

[32]

Then I questioned him—God be pleased with him—and the purport of my question was this: ‘Does this *ḥadīth* provide sound proof to refute someone who claims to be a Companion after the end of that age? They’ve refuted whoever claimed to be a Companion after two hundred years, and they refuted whoever claimed to be one after six hundred years and whoever claimed to be one during the second hundred years. Why look at the story of ‘Ikrāsh<sup>361</sup> and Mu‘ammar al-Maghribī<sup>362</sup> and Ratīn al-Hindī!<sup>363</sup> And the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar devotes much time to their lives in *al-Iṣāba fī l-ṣaḥāba*.<sup>364</sup> Likewise, (318) his student Shams al-Dīn al-Sakhāwī deals with this in the *Sharḥ al-Alfiyya fī ṣṭilāḥ al-ḥadīth*,<sup>365</sup> as does the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī in *al-Hāwī fī l-fatāwī*.<sup>366</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Companions can’t be encompassed—God be pleased with them! They were scattered before and after the death of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! One group of them wandered throughout the quarters of the earth. But the *ḥadīth* in question is general and refers

<sup>360</sup> Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh; see *Usd* I, p. 307 f., no. 647; died *circa* 74/693.

<sup>361</sup> *Iṣāba* IV, p. 537, no. 5641.

<sup>362</sup> *Iṣāba* VI, p. 368, no. 8607.

<sup>363</sup> *Iṣāba* II, p. 523, no. 2761; the name appears as *Ratan* in Ibn Ḥajar.

<sup>364</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 139, LXX.

<sup>365</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 140, LXXI; died 902/1497.

<sup>366</sup> Not found in the *Hāwī*.

especially to those who were famous among the people as Companions and widely known.' This then is what unveiling and direct vision has indicated.

[33]

Then I talked with him about the Rajrāja<sup>367</sup> and how the people claim that these were Companions who visited the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—during his lifetime and that the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—spoke to them in the Berber language. Al-Shihāb deals with this story in the *Sharḥ al-Shifā'*<sup>368</sup> but he cites it without a multiple chain of transmission. And more than one of the scholarly authorities has rejected it.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'They weren't Companions. The light of Companionship with the Prophet isn't concealed from those endowed with deeper vision and there isn't one of the Companions in al-Maghrib (the West). But God the Sublime knows best!'

This then is some of what we heard from al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—by way of explaining difficulties we had with *ḥadīths*. Let's leave it at this amount which is sufficient for the novice (*murīd*). But God knows best!

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<sup>367</sup> Meier, *Bausteine*, 'Vorrang des Glaubens', pp. 897 f./*Essays*, 'Priority of Faith', pp. 614 ff.

<sup>368</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 140, LXXII; died 844/1440.

## CHAPTER TWO

[1] P. 406. 'And when He gave them a righteous son, they attributed partners unto Him with regard to what He had given them' (7/190).

[2] and [3] Pp. 406-08. 'Will you place on earth someone who will perpetrate corruption there and shed blood...' (2/30).

[4] Pp. 408-10. 'And follow the best of what has been sent down to you from your Lord' (39/53).

[5] Pp. 410-12. 'And He created for you hearing and eyes, and hearts so that you might be thankful' (16/78).

[6] Pp. 412-13. 'Those who when they do a vile deed or wrong themselves (their souls) remember God and ask forgiveness for their sins' (3/135).

[7] P. 413. 'And he attached to them the word godfearing which they are more entitled to and are worthy of' (48/26).

[8] Pp. 413-17. 'And it was He Who destroyed the first 'Ād' (53/50).

[9] Pp. 417-21. 'And David and Solomon—when they passed judgement concerning the tilled land...' (21/78).

[10] Pp. 421-32. Meaning of the words: *al-sāq*, *Mashīkhā*, *injīl*, *al-tawrāh*, *Mushaffaḥ*, *al-manḥamannā*, *aḥmā ḥamaythā aṭmā ṭamaythā*. The Syriac: language of Adam, the spirits, members of the *Dīwān*, inhabitants of Paradise, and its relation to children's speech (e.g. *ugh*, *būbū*, *ʿaʿa* and *mūmū*). Its use by angels who interrogate the newly deceased in his grave; actual words they employ and the believer's response.

[11] Pp. 432-36. Some words in the Qurʾān are Syriac: *asfāran*, *al-rabbiyyūn*, *ʿadn*, *rahw*. But others thought to be Syriac are not: *hayta laka*, *shahr*. How al-Dabbāgh and al-Ḥamaṭī learned Syriac.

[12] Pp. 436-37. About the Qurʾān's external and internal aspect.

[13] P. 437. The Qurʾān is written in Arabic on the Well-guarded Tablet. The opening letters of some surahs are in Syriac.

[14] Pp. 437-51. Opening letters of the surahs and what they mean in Syriac: *ṣād*, *kāf-hā-yāʾ* - *ʿayn-ṣād*, *alif-lām-mīm*, *qāf*, etc. What different scholars have said about these letters.

[15] Pp. 451-57. The basis for using the letters in Syriac (consonants and vowels).



[16] Pp. 457-58. Qurʾānic verses that refer to God's knowledge being renewed, though His knowledge is eternal.

[17] Pp. 458-64. The problem to do with 'the cranes', as well as the Qurʾānic verse: 'We sent no apostle and no prophet before you except that Satan cast into his wish when he wished' (22/52).

[18] P. 464. On Hārūt and Mārūt.

[19] Pp. 464-69. 'And He sends down from the heavens mountains in which is hail' (24/43). A discussion of certain meteorological phenomena: hail, snow, lightning, winds, etc.

[20] Pp. 469-73. On the cause of earthquakes and the earth's swallowing up people. Resurrection of the body.

[21] Pp. 473-74. 'Against you shall be dispatched flame of fire and molten brass...' (55/35).

[22] Pp. 474-76. 'On the day when We shall roll up the heavens the way a scroll (*al-sijill*) is rolled up...' (21/104). The meaning of *al-sijill*.

[23] Pp. 476-77. 'He [Moses] said: "Oh my Lord, show me so I may behold You!"' (7/143).

[24] P. 477. 'God eradicates and He establishes whatever He wishes' (13/39). Explained as being connected with random thoughts about future events, some of which occur while others do not.

[25] Pp. 477-84. 'And when the angels said: "Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you..."' (3/43). Does this prove that Mary was a prophetess? The difference between prophethood and Friendship with God. And what a person with illumination beholds.

[26] Pp. 484-85. 'And Dhū'l-Nūn when he went away in anger and he thought...' (21/87). The meaning of 'in anger'.

[27] Pp. 485-86. 'And Job when he called to his Lord: "Adversity has befallen me..."' (21/83). The meaning of the adversity that befell him.

[28] Pp. 486-89. 'Whoever turns away from remembering Me, his livelihood shall be confined...' (20/124). The meaning of a confined livelihood. Some observations concerning Christians and Jews.

[29] P. 489. 'And he felt inclined toward her, except he saw the sign of his Lord' (12/24). What did Joseph feel inclined to do to Zulaykhā?

[30] Pp. 489-90. 'And God spoke directly to Moses' (4/164). Is this exclusive to Moses?

[31] Pp. 490-91. 'And when you're journeying in the land, there's no fault in you should you shorten the prayer' (4/101).

[32] Pp. 491-93. The implied meaning (*mafḥūm*) of the *ḥadīth*: 'Alms tax is owed for freely grazing sheep.'

[33] Pp. 493-95. 'And when night settled over him, he saw a star and said: "This is my Lord."' (6/76). When Abraham said this, was it a deduction for his own sake?

[34] Pp. 495-96. 'It is He Who has sent His apostle with guidance and the true religion in order to render it victorious over every religion...' (61/9). What rendering it victorious over every religion means.

[35] Pp. 496-98. 'And some of them have made a covenant with God: "If He bestows on us of His bounty..." (9/75). The story of Tha<sup>o</sup>laba.

[36] Pp. 498-501. 'And when your Lord took from the offspring of Adam their progeny from their loins' (7/172). This event took place in the world of the spirits.

[37] Pp. 501-02. On whether the brothers of Joseph are prophets and why they acted as they did.

[38] Pp. 503-04. 'You're afraid of the people, whereas God has a greater claim for you to fear Him' (33/37). How can God reproach His prophet who's the lord of the knowers of God and chief of the prophets and apostles?

[39] Pp. 504-06. 'God forgive you! Why did you give them permission before it was clear to you which of them spoke the truth...' (9/43).

[40] Pp. 506-08. 'We never punish until We have sent forth an apostle' (17/15).

[41] P. 508. 'Your companion is not possessed' (81/22).

[42] Pp. 508-09. 'It isn't for us to return to it except if God our Lord so wills' (7/89).

[43] Pp. 509-11. 'By the star when it sinks...' (51/1-2).

[44] Pp. 511-14. 'Verily, We have given you a clear victory (*fath*)...' (48/1-2). What's meant by victory is vision (*mushāhada*), i.e. *fath*=illumination.

[45] Pp. 514-17. 'Who knows the Unseen and does not disclose His Unseen to anyone' (72/26); 'Verily, God has knowledge of the Hour' (31/34); and the *ḥadīth*: "There are five things which only God knows.'

[46] Pp. 517-18. Knowledge of the Night of Power. If the Friends of God know when that night arrives each year, the Prophet certainly knew it.

## (325) CHAPTER TWO

On some Qurʾānic verses that we questioned him about and an explanation of the Syriac language in connection with this. Likewise, an explanation of the letters at the beginning of certain surahs, such as: *ṣād*, *qāf*, *yā-sīn*, *ṭā-hā*, *kāf-hā* - *yā* - *ʿayn-sīn*, *alif-lām-mīm*, *alif-lām-rā*, and other of God the Sublime's secrets that you'll learn about in this chapter.

[1]

I questioned al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about God's words concerning the story of Adam and Eve—peace be upon them: 'And when He gave them a righteous son, they attributed partners unto Him with regard to what He had given them. But God is exalted above what they associate with Him!' (7/190). I said: 'Adam is God's prophet and His beloved. How could he attribute partners unto Him?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This is blaming the parents for what sons and descendants have done. It's like the case of someone who has a garden with fruits and produce. The children of Zayd come to the garden, take some of its fruit and cause damage to it. The owner of the garden then goes to Zayd and begins to quarrel with him and blame him. He says: "You've caused damage to my garden and eaten my fruits. You've done this and you've done that!" The noble story [in the Qurʾān] is after this fashion.' I heard this answer from him—God be pleased with him—when he was at the beginning [of his spiritual state].

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this is the view of the [learned] rabbi of this religious community ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAbbās—God be pleased with them both—which the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī transmits in *al-Durr al-manthūr fī tafsīr al-Qurʾān bi'l-ma'thūr*.<sup>1</sup> Likewise, the *sayyid* al-Jurjānī chooses this explanation in the *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*.<sup>2</sup> God be pleased with this splendid *sayyid*! How great is his knowledge of God and God's prophets!

They infer this explanation because the wording at the end of the verse can only refer to the infidels. Even if one reads the plural *jaʿalū* instead of *jaʿalā lahū shurakā* (the dual), it still can only refer to the infidels. But God the Sublime knows best!

[2]

(326) And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about what the angels say in God the Sublime's words: 'Will You place on

<sup>1</sup> *Durr manthūr* III, p. 626, on Qurʾān 7/190.

<sup>2</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 140, LXXIII; died 816/1413; *Mawāqif*, pp. 361 f.

earth someone who will perpetrate corruption there and shed blood, whereas we proclaim Your praise and sanctify You?' (2/30). I said: 'This contains a form of calumny but the angels—peace be upon them—are protected from sin.'<sup>3</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This isn't calumny—far be it from them—for the angels are the esteemed servants of God. These words should be taken in the sense of a person saying: "Will You place on earth someone who's veiled [from You], while You have someone with You who isn't veiled and who'd be better on earth, namely us? We look upon You and we recognize Your worth. Nor do we disobey Your command. One who's veiled doesn't recognize Your worth and disobeys Your command." It's as if they said: "Will You place someone on earth who doesn't recognize You, whereas we recognize You?" This is a statement from them that indicates the extent of their knowledge and accords with their [limited] view. That's why God the Sublime has said: "I know what you do not know!" (2/30), i.e. you think that one who's veiled can't recognize My worth and that only one who sees Me can recognize My worth. Such is the extent of your knowledge. But My knowledge goes beyond this, for I strengthen the one who's veiled and remove the curtain between Myself and him so that he receives knowledge from Me and attains science from Me which you aren't able to support. That's why God the Sublime has said: "And He taught Adam the names, all of them" (2/31).'

[3]

And I asked: 'Are all the angels addressed in this verse or only the angels of the earth?'

He replied—God be pleased with him and give us profit through him: 'Only the angels of the earth.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is the view of a group of Qur'ānic commentators, among whom the [learned] rabbi of this religious community, °Abd Allāh b. °Abbās—God be pleased with them both! Consult the Qur'ānic commentaries of al-Tha°labī<sup>4</sup> and others as well.

He then went on—God be pleased with him—to speak about the angels—blessings and peace be upon them—and Iblīs and whatever else is connected with the story. The words he imparted were such that minds can't grasp what's behind them. For this reason we haven't recorded them. But God the Sublime knows best!

<sup>3</sup> On the nature of angels cf. EI, s.v. *malā'ika*; van Hees, *Enzyklopädie*, pp. 254 ff.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 296, fn. 130.

(327) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The angels understood that the offspring of Adam are veiled from their Lord—He is exalted—, that they’re responsible for themselves and follow their own opinion, and so the angels exclaimed: “Will You place on earth someone who will perpetrate corruption?”’

They knew this because of God the Sublime’s word: “*khalīfa*” (deputy), for the characteristic of *khalīfa* is independence, autocratic behavior and being separate from others. The *khalīfa* ascribes to himself planning, knowledge of final outcomes and judging what’s best. He cuts himself off from his Lord—He is exalted! Herein lies his ruin and his death. From the word *khalīfa* the angels concluded that a descendant of Adam is veiled from God—He is exalted! But God the Sublime knows best!’

[4]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘And follow the best (*aḥsan*) of what has been sent down to you from your Lord’ (39/53). I said: ‘This Qur’ānic verse requires that some of what’s been sent down isn’t the best, whereas the whole of the Qur’ān is best.’ And I mentioned to him the answers of the religious scholars [to this question]—God be pleased with them!

One of these is that whoever suffers injustice is allowed to take revenge, as in God the Sublime’s words: ‘If someone commits aggression against you, commit aggression against him in the same manner’ (2/194).

But the best for him would be patience, in accordance with God the Sublime’s words: ‘But if you’re patient, it’s better for those who are patient’ (16/126).

It’s as if God said: ‘Follow forgiveness, not punishment. Punishment is a good deed but forgiveness is better (*aḥsan*).’

Another is that the meaning of best (*al-aḥsan*) is what abrogates (*nāsikh*), while the good is the abrogated (*mansūkh*).

And another is that God the Sublime has told us that among His bondsmen there are those who obey and others who disobey. We should follow those who obey—this is the best.

Another one is that it means: follow what’s been ordered, not what’s been prohibited.

Another is that it means: follow the important prescriptions (‘*azā’im*’), not the concessions (*rukhaṣ*).

Then I said: ‘These explanations aren’t in harmony with the Qur’ānic verse.

(328) As for the first explanation, the wording of the end of the verse requires that whoever doesn't follow the best should fear being struck by punishment from God and belongs to the scoffers and the unbelievers. But this isn't what will happen to someone who doesn't show forgiveness.

As for the second one, if the meaning is that what's abrogated is good because it's followed, this isn't so since one isn't allowed to follow a practice that's been abrogated. If the meaning is [abrogated] "with respect to recitation", then what's abrogated (*mansūkh*) and what abrogates (*nāsikh*) both belong to "the best".

As for the third one, whoever is disobedient (sins) shouldn't be followed, and certainly isn't good. And the same can be said about what's forbidden. As for the concessions, if they're good then someone who practices them doesn't deserve what's described at the end of the verse—as is the case with someone who didn't show forgiveness in the first explanation, for he doesn't suffer what's described at the end of the verse either.

In short, "the best" in the first and the fifth explanation isn't in harmony with the end of the verse, and there's no "good" in the other explanations. Therefore "the best" referred to in the verse remains obscure.'

He then replied—God be pleased with him: 'What's mentioned in the previous explanations doesn't contain the secret of the verse or its light. Its secret and its light are: "Oh My bondsmen, follow the best book and the best apostle that's been sent down to you from your Lord. And the best book that's been sent down to us is the Qur'ān, and the best apostle to come to us from God is the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The good consists of the divine books that have undergone no change and the apostles whom God the Sublime sent before our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!"'

And I said to our Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'The divine books include the Torah and the Gospels, but adding the words "to you" contradicts the sense you've given to "the best" because then "the good" as well as "the best" would have been sent down to us. The Torah, however, was sent to the Jews, and the Gospels were sent to the Jews and the Christians.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Our Prophet Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was sent in general to the Arabs, to the Jews, and to the Christians as well as to others. What's best, i.e. the Qur'ān, was sent down to all of them. What's good, i.e. the divine books, was sent down to each people

individually—the *sharīʿa* of Ishmael to the Arabs, the Torah to the Jews and the Gospels to the Christians. The good was sent down to them in general under these conditions. This is evident.’

(329) I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this view has been put forward by a group of Qurʾānic commentators. They take the meaning of ‘the best’ to be the Qurʾān, and the full account of it is found in the Shaykh’s explanation—God be pleased with him—and there’s no doubt about its being in harmony with what the end of the verse contains. Indeed, whoever doesn’t follow the Qurʾān and the Apostle and doesn’t believe in them deserves to suffer the things described at the end of the verse. But God the Sublime knows best!

[5]

Then I asked him—God be pleased with him—what was the wisdom of hearing being placed before sight<sup>5</sup> in God the Sublime’s words: ‘And He created for you hearing and eyes, and hearts so that you might be thankful’ (16/78); and in His words: ‘He produced for you hearing and eyes’ (23/78); as well as in His words: ‘Verily, hearing and sight, and the heart—one will be questioned about all of those’ (17/36).

And there are other noble Qurʾānic verses like these in which hearing precedes sight, although sight is of greater use and more general benefit. The person with sight benefits, whether during the day or at night. On the other hand, for someone with hearing but no sight night and day are the same, as are light and darkness, the sun and the moon. He has no access to anything of the lights of these luminous bodies. And it’s the same for him with regard to the miracles of God the Sublime’s creations. Most of these miracles occur in the forms of created things and the beauty of their structure. The forms are only perceived through sight. The beauty of structure in the nature of Adam’s offspring and all the animals, as well as the various kinds of plants and flowers, are only perceived through sight. The case is the same with the creation of the sky—how it’s raised on high without columns and ornamented with the stars. And there are other benefits like this which are too numerous to be reckoned and counted. They can only be perceived through sight. So to us it appears that sight is the stronger and should rightfully precede hearing.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Everything you related about sight is true. But there’s one benefit from hearing which replaces all of this and outshines everything you mentioned, namely

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<sup>5</sup> On this point see Ritter, *Bildersprache*, p. 17; today one may be reluctant to accept Ritter’s sweeping generalization.

that the Apostle—blessings and peace be upon him—and He who sent him—He is mighty and glorious—and all the hidden matters which one must believe in are perceived through hearing. And it follows from this that all the prescriptions of religious law depend on hearing. Let's explain further what we've said. If we were to suppose the offspring of Adam had no hearing at all and an apostle of God then came to them from God and said: "I am the apostle of God to you" (61/6), (330) this would be a voice that can't be seen, and without having any hearing they wouldn't be able to hear his words.

Thus the apostle would have no effect. If he said to them: "This and that miracle are proof of my truthfulness", they wouldn't hear him and he'd remain ineffective. If he said to them: "God—He is mighty and glorious—has ordered you to profess belief in His oneness and not to associate anything with Him as a partner", they wouldn't hear him and again he'd remain ineffective. If he said to them: "He's ordered you to believe in me and in all His apostles, in His angels and in His books and the Final Day", they wouldn't hear him and again he'd remain ineffective. And if he said to them: "He's placed this and that matter upon you as a duty and forbidden to you this and that and allowed you this and that as something indifferent", they wouldn't hear him and he'd remain ineffective.

So it's clear that if there were no hearing, the apostle and the One Who sent him would go unrecognized and there'd be no faith in the hidden and the visible, and the *shari'ah* wouldn't be followed correctly. Of necessity there'd be no reward and punishment, and Paradise and its delights would be removed, as well as Hell and its fire, because without an apostle being sent there's neither reward nor punishment—in accordance with God the Sublime's words: "We do not inflict punishment until We send forth an apostle" (17/15). Even the Resurrection wouldn't occur if there were no hearing. In short, if the offspring of Adam had no hearing, the obligation to observe the precepts of religion would disappear. Adam's offspring would be on the level of animals. But by means of hearing they've come to merit the highest level and there are those among them who've attained the Heavenly Host (angels).

Thus it's clear that hearing is stronger in usefulness and more comprehensive in its benefits because the secrets of divine lordliness are based on it. For this reason it's mentioned first in the referred to Qur'anic verses which precede the uttering of thanks, because the favor received through hearing is greater than the favor through sight. But God the Sublime knows best!



I, al-Lamaṭī, have this to add. Consider the beauty of such an answer—God give you success! When I heard it, I began to feel amazed at myself, wondering how this answer had escaped me despite its clarity. God alone is the guide—He is exalted!

[6]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘Those who when they do a vile deed or wrong themselves (their souls) remember God and ask forgiveness for their sins’ (3/135); and God the Sublime’s words: ‘Whoever does evil or wrongs himself (his soul) and then asks God for forgiveness will find God all-forgiving, all-compassionate’ (4/110).

[I asked:] (331) ‘What’s the meaning of “wronging himself (his soul)”?’ Indeed, “wronging oneself” is confirmed by what precedes it, i.e. “doing evil” in the second verse and “doing a vile deed” in the first one. But “wrong” is more universal than what precedes it, and “the universal can’t be joined to something else by the conjunction *or*”.’

Then I mentioned for him what the Qur’ānic commentators have said about this. Some take ‘doing evil’ and ‘a vile deed’ to mean a major sin and ‘wronging oneself’ to mean a minor sin. In my view, however, ‘doing evil’ and ‘a vile deed’ refer to sin in general, whereas ‘wronging oneself’ refers to resolving on sin without the act occurring openly. If, for example, someone resolves to commit fornication but it turns out he doesn’t commit fornication and indulge the carnal soul’s lusts, though he’s determined to do so—through this determination and resolution he becomes someone who wrongs his soul (his self) by exposing it to punishment, even if it failed to attain its lusts.

We went on speaking at length about this Qur’ānic verse, and he offered three answers—God be pleased with him! In our talk we delved deeply into the matter. Then he fell silent for a short time.

After that he said—God be pleased with him: ‘Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Karīm al-Baṣrī says to you: “The reason this verse was sent down is that in the Age of Ignorance [before Islam] the Arabs would dispute on behalf of a wrongdoer, defending him and declaring him innocent of what he was charged with, even when they knew he’d done the wrong in question, as for instance when someone in a group steals and they all know it but then they dispute it and deny his stealing. The one who steals commits the vile deed and the evil, and the one who disputes wrongs himself (his soul) by bearing false witness and telling lies.”’ And al-Dabbāgh said to

me—God be pleased with him: ‘Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm really knows how to discuss.’

I was very surprised by this explanation because of how it accords with the wording of the verse: ‘Whoever does evil or wrongs himself’ (4/110), where God the Sublime says: ‘And do not dispute on behalf of those who betray themselves (4/107).’ ‘There you are! You have disputed on their behalf in the present life, but who will dispute with God on their behalf on the Day of Resurrection?’ (4/109).

While I delved into the matter of this noble verse with him, we were outside the Bāb al-Ḥadīd, one of the gates of Fez—God the Sublime watch over the city! Meanwhile, the said Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm was in Baṣra but he heard our discussion and knew what we meant. He then answered us from the place where he was—God be pleased with His noble Friends! (332) An explanation will be given [later in this book] about the secret of his hearing our words at so great a distance. But God the Sublime knows best!

[7]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘And he attached to them the word godfearing which they are more entitled to and are worthy of’ (48/26). [I asked:] ‘What’s meant by “more entitled to and worthy of”? After all, greater entitlement and worthiness didn’t exist before Islam.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Greater entitlement and worthiness are based on God’s first promise and the pre-eternal divine decree which took place before the creation of created beings. But God the Sublime knows best!’

[8]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘And it was He Who destroyed the first °Ād’ (53/50). [I asked:] ‘Was there another, second °Ād?’

And I noted the confusion in the words of the Qur’ānic commentators. They say: ‘It was Hūd—peace be upon him—who was sent to the °Ād, and he lived a long time before Abraham—peace be upon him!’ Then they relate in connection with the story of the destruction of his people how a delegation from among them went to the sanctuary of God in Mecca to pray for water. But Mecca was built by Abraham and Ishmael—blessings and peace be upon them—and so the matter of this story is unclear for many people. There’s even one group that maintains there was only one °Ād who are referred to as the first with regard to the Thamūd. And the second

are the Thamūd. Another group maintains there was more than one °Ād, and the first were those to whom Hūd was sent and who were punished with the [devastating] wind. The second °Ād were sent a different prophet and they were punished by some means other than the wind. It was from among them that a delegation went to Mecca but their prophet and their punishment haven't been specified. For this group what's in [the surah] *The Sand-Dunes* is obscure, i.e. the story that mentions the members of the delegation and the punishment of the °Ād by means of the wind. And Hūd accompanied them according to God the Sublime's words: 'And remember Hūd, the brother of the °Ād' (46/21).

And He says in another verse: 'And to °Ād their brother Hūd' (7/65).

For our part we say that the story in the surah *The Sand-Dunes* is about the members of the delegation, because Aḥmad [b. Ḥanbal] has published this (333) with a good chain of transmission from al-Ḥārith b. Ḥassān al-Bakrī<sup>6</sup> who said:

'I went out with al-°Alā' b. al-Ḥaḍramī<sup>7</sup> to see the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—etc.' And the text contains the words: 'Then I said: "I take refuge with God and His Apostle lest I be like the delegation of the °Ād."' He asked: "What's the delegation of the °Ād?" He knew about the matter but he wanted to be served more. Then I said: "The °Ād hadn't received any rain. So they sent Qayl b. °Anz to Mu°āwiya b. Bakr<sup>8</sup> in Mecca to pray for rain for them. He remained a month as Mu°āwiya's guest. When a month had gone by, he went out and prayed for rain for them. Two clouds then passed by him and he chose the black one among them. A voice was heard: 'Take it as ashes! It will not let one of the °Ād remain.'"<sup>9</sup>—Part of the *ḥadīth* has been published by al-Tirmidhī, al-Nasā'ī and Ibn Māja. Consult Ibn Ḥajar where he deals with the surah *The Sand-Dunes*.<sup>10</sup>

In another version: Qayl b. °Anz went out with Marthad b. Sa°d and a group of seventy notables. At that time the °Amāliqa were in Mecca and their chief was Mu°āwiya b. Bakr. And the story goes on until at the end it's related: 'Marthad b. Sa°d then said: "Oh people, you won't be given rain because of your prayer until you obey your

<sup>6</sup> *Usd I*, p. 386, no. 879.

<sup>7</sup> Gramlich gives information about him in *Wunder*, p. 94.

<sup>8</sup> The story is found in al-Ṭabarī, *Annales I*, pp. 235 ff.

<sup>9</sup> But see the version in al-Ṭabarī, *Annales I*, p. 238: 'akharta ramādan...' (You have chosen ashes...).

<sup>10</sup> *Fath IX*, p. 550.

apostle.” Then Qayl said to Mu‘āwiya: “Take him away from us! He isn’t to go forth with us. He believes in Hūd and confirms that he’s true.”

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Hūd was sent to the second ‘Ād to renew the law of the prophets who were sent to them before him. It’s his story which is recounted for us in the Qur’ān and it’s his people who go as a delegation to Mecca. And they were punished by the barren wind. Hūd was among the offspring of Ishmael—peace be upon him! His genealogy is: Hūd<sup>11</sup> b. ‘Abir b. Shayyā<sup>c</sup> b. al-Hārith b. Kilāb b. Qaydār b. (334) Ishmael. The second ‘Ād aren’t all among Ishmael’s offspring, but only Hūd and his clan. Moreover, it says in the Qur’ān: “And unto the ‘Ād their brother Hūd” (7/65)—most probably because he and his clan dwelt among them and travelled with them. Shaddād b. ‘Ād<sup>12</sup> was one of them and he possessed the huge tent with pillars.’

He continued: ‘The religious scholars believe that “Iram with pillars” is a city built from gold and resembling Paradise—they’ve said much about it. But this isn’t so. Rather Iram is the name of a tribe of the ‘Ād, and “with pillars (*dhāt al-‘imād*)” is an epithet of that tribe, i.e. possessing the pillar for the tent that belongs to their chief. Or it means the pillars of all their tents. In fact, I’ve seen their dwelling place’—and he described it similarly to the way the religious scholars have described the Aḥqāf. And he continued: ‘This place is [the size of] a journey of nine days. And their chief lives in the center of the land. Whoever goes to see him walks barefoot and with bare head from any direction a distance of four and a half days in among the tents. This is because of the greatness of its prosperity, but the population is so numerous that the land was too narrow to contain them. God the Sublime has sent them water and springs which flow upon the earth’s surface from a mountainous region far from their country and they cultivate the land with it.’ And he said: ‘The tent of their chief extends over the ground for the distance that one can shoot an arrow. Its tent-pegs and its pillars are plated with pure gold, and its tent ropes are of silk. Indeed, I’ve seen coins made from its gold which until now remained buried in their earth. All their tents are plated with gold. And at that time there was only white gold in the midst of which they lived.<sup>13</sup> It was unto these people that God sent Hūd, whose genealogy was just mentioned.’

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<sup>11</sup> Cf. EQ s.n.

<sup>12</sup> On him see *Weltgeschichte*, passim.

<sup>13</sup> Sense uncertain.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what he's said about the city named 'Iram of the pillars' and his refutation of what others have said about it is the view held by eminent religious scholars such as the ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar in the *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī*.<sup>14</sup> The latter, after referring to the story about the city in question, says: 'This is reported from °Abd Allāh b. Lahī°a.'<sup>15</sup> And what's transmitted from Mujāhid<sup>16</sup> supports the second explanation about 'with pillars (*dhāt al-°imād*)'. Mujāhid says: 'It means that they were people of pillars, i.e. of tents.'<sup>17</sup> And he mentions other views on the subject. Consult these where he discusses the surah *The Dawn*.

What al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him—about Hūd's genealogy is pure unveiling and direct vision, for he's an unschooled layman (335) with no knowledge of history (chronology) and other such matters. No one should oppose him because of what the historians say about the genealogy of Hūd since that's based on a single report. Moreover, even the single report is confused concerning Hūd's genealogy. His genealogy is given as: Hūd b. °Abd Allāh b. Rabāḥ b. al-Jārūd b. °Ād b. °Aws b. Iram b. Sām b. Nūḥ (Noah), or as Hūd b. Shāriḥ b. Arfakhshadh b. Sām b. Nūḥ—peace be upon him! Accordingly, he's a distant cousin of °Ād's father. It has been said: 'He was made an °Ādite—though he wasn't [originally] one of them—because they understood him best, were familiar with his manner and very keen to follow him.'

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'As for the first °Ād, they lived before the people of Noah—peace be upon him—and God sent them a prophet named Huwayd.' And he added—God be pleased with him: 'He was an independent apostle with his own law, in contrast to Hūd who was sent to the second °Ād in order to renew the law brought by apostles before him.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Every independent apostle must necessarily have his own book. And our lord, the previously mentioned Huwayd, also had a book which I know by heart, as I know by heart all the books of the apostles.' I asked him: 'Can you enumerate them?' He replied: 'I know them by heart. I don't just enumerate them. But hear this from me!' Then he began to enumerate them, one book after another. He said: 'A Friend of God isn't a [real] Friend until he believes in all these books in detail—[believing] generally isn't sufficient for him.' Then I asked: 'Is this

<sup>14</sup> *Fath* IX, p. 715.

<sup>15</sup> GAS I, p. 94; died 174/790.

<sup>16</sup> GAS I, p. 29; died 104/722.

<sup>17</sup> *Tafsīr Mujāhid* II, p. 756.

the case with all the Friends of God who've received illumination?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Only for one of them, the Support (*al-ghawth*).'<sup>18</sup> Thus at that time I learned that he was the Support—God be pleased with him! Moreover, his forms of knowledge—God be pleased with him—were an indication of this. But if I were to write down everything I heard from him, it would fill volumes. And how many times he said to me: 'Everything I tell you is in accordance with what minds can sustain.'

He said: 'God destroyed the first ʿĀd—the companions of Huwayd—with stones and fire. That is to say, (336) God the Sublime sent them stones from the sky which they were worried about and they fled from them. Then God brought forth fire against them and it consumed them.'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Before Noah there were seven hundred apostles among the prophets and their stories contain many miracles. But in His noble Book God hasn't told us anything about these because their peoples weren't known during the eras of revelation.'

And I asked: 'What's the meaning of the Prophet's words in the *ḥadīth* of intercession<sup>18</sup> where he says about Noah: "He was the first of the apostles."?'<sup>9</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This means he was the first of the apostles to a people who were unbelievers. The apostles before him were sent to people whose faith was sound.'

And I asked: 'Why were Huwayd's people punished with stones and fire if they were believers?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This was God the Sublime's practice with peoples before Noah. He'd destroy them if they neglected a large part of the precepts, even if they had faith in the basic doctrines.'

[9]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And David and Solomon—when they passed judgement concerning the tilled land, when the sheep of the people had strayed onto it, and We bore witness to their judgement. And We made Solomon understand it and We gave both of them judgement and knowledge' (21/78).

I said: 'This story is used as proof by those who say: "Only one is right but the one who's wrong is excused, indeed even rewarded for having made the effort and done what he could." David—peace be

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<sup>18</sup> Cf. editor's fn., I, p. 336; cf. Huitema, *Voorspraak*, pp. 21 ff.

upon him—judged that the sheep should be given to the owners of the tilled land in compensation for their crops that the sheep had destroyed. Solomon—peace be upon him—(337) judged that the sheep should be given to the owner of the tilled land for him to derive a profit from and he gave the tilled land to the owner of the sheep to cultivate until it was restored to the way it had been before the sheep grazed it. Once it was good again, he was to return the land to its people and they were to return his sheep to him. And God sanctioned Solomon's judgement when He said: "And We made Solomon understand it" (21/78).

They also use as proof another story that involved the two of them, i.e. the story about the two women, the elder of whom had her child carried off by the wolf. She then took the younger woman's child and claimed it was her own. The women went before David—peace be upon him—and he awarded the child to the elder woman because she had a vineyard. Solomon, on the other hand, ruled that the child be divided in half between them. When the younger woman heard about dividing the child in half, she conceded to the elder, saying: "This is her child." The elder woman went on demanding her half of the child. Solomon then judged in favor of the younger woman and to the elder he said: "If this were your child, you wouldn't demand a half of it!"

And they use as proof a third story that involves them both, i.e. about a woman who it was claimed had let a dog have its way with her. David ordered that she be stoned since witnesses had testified to this. Then Solomon heard something like this story while he was playing with the young boys.<sup>19</sup> He then ordered that the witnesses be separated. They were separated and now their words differed from one another. David changed his judgement because of the separation of the witnesses.

And there's a fourth story involving the two of them, i.e. there was a woman in whose vulva liquid was found. It was claimed that this was a man's semen and that she was a whore. David—peace be upon him—ordered that she be stoned but Solomon—peace be upon him—ordered that they take the liquid and cook it. If it became thick, it was the liquid of an egg. If not, then it was semen. So they took the liquid, cooked it and found that it was the liquid of an egg. They then knew the woman had been falsely accused. Consult Ibn Hajar in the chapter *al-Aḥkām*.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Not found in this wording in *Fatḥ*; text and sense uncertain.

<sup>20</sup> *Fatḥ* XV, pp. 46 ff.; see also *Fatḥ* VII, pp. 124 ff.

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The way you [and the jurists] are talking, David was wrong and Solomon was right—peace be upon them! But how can the jurists believe something like this about the prophets—peace be upon them—since the latter are God’s elite within His creation. For God they surpass in excellence the angels and all that’s dear to Him. If it were possible for them to be wrong and for error to issue from them, what trust would we have in them since they’d be like us. God forbid that David committed an error!

As for the explanation of the first story, David—peace be upon him—rendered a judgement based on the essence of what’s right, (338) which is compensation for the value of the cultivated land. Thus he ordered the handing over of the sheep, because in those days they didn’t possess money or only very little. Thus when they did business with one another, it was with sheep and cattle because of the great number of them they possessed. That’s why he ordered the sheep to be handed over and he didn’t order money to be paid out.

As for Solomon—peace be upon him—he delivered a judgement based on accommodation. He thought it right that an amount of the yield and produce from the sheep in terms of fat, milk and wool be paid to cover the value of the cultivated land—which consisted of grapes—until it was returned to its proper state. This requires [both parties] to come to terms. One can’t say that he who renders a judgement based on the essence of what’s correct is wrong, and that he who renders a judgement based on accommodation is the one who’s right.

As for the explanation of the judgement in the other stories, David—peace be upon him—delivered a judgement based on what was apparent—in all three stories—which is obligatory when passing judgement, since the judge isn’t allowed to pass judgement on the basis of anything else. Solomon—praise be upon him—made use of stratagems against what was hidden in order to make it apparent and then he passed judgement on it. But one can’t say about the first judgement that it’s wrong and that the second judgement is what’s right. On the contrary, both of them are right. If it was necessary to reverse the first judgement once the hidden became apparent, this reversal doesn’t mean that the first judgement was wrong at the time it was delivered. It’s like when witnesses give false testimony about something. The judge proceeds on the basis of their testimony which is what he’s obliged to do. But this doesn’t mean he’s wrong. If the witnesses repent, change what they said and acknowledge their falsehood, the judge is obliged to pass judgement



in accordance with their changed testimony. But it doesn't follow from this that his first judgement was false.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'I know personally a man from Fez who journeyed to his brother in God who lived in Baṣra, i.e. the previously mentioned Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm, and the latter was a judge. He was sitting with him when two men who were having a dispute arrived. The one man said: "My adversary stole a ruby from me which is worth a very great sum and he has it with him." His adversary said: "He may search my clothes and everything I have on. And in addition I swear by God that I don't have the ruby." The judge wanted to pass judgement on the basis of this. But his companion said to him: "Don't judge between them." The companion then turned toward the two adversaries and said: "This brother of ours in God", i.e. the judge, "has prepared a meal for us and we'd like you to partake of it. After we've eaten the meal, the judge will see to your case." We went with (339) the judge and when the food was brought, the companion and the judge watched the accused. He cleared his throat and wiped up the phlegm with a *sabtiyya* he had with him. The judge took the *sabtiyya* from his hand and behold, there was the ruby that had come forth with the phlegm. We gave it to the plaintiff.'

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'This was a stratagem to cause the hidden to become apparent. If he'd passed judgement on the basis of the search and the oath, his judgement would have been right, even though he knew through unveiling that the accused had the ruby. But God didn't make this a duty for him, and so his companion employed a stratagem to cause the hidden to become apparent.'

I asked: 'Did the judge know through unveiling that the accused had the ruby with him?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, both he and his companion knew it.' And he said: 'This is similar to what happened between the two noble prophets in the three stories. In the first story David passed judgement in favor of the elder woman because of her vineyard and the vineyard required this. In the second story, he imposed the penalty of stoning because of the testimony. And in the third story he also imposed this penalty because of the existence of an indication (testimony). Solomon, on the other hand, made use of stratagems in the three stories to cause what was hidden to become apparent. But God the Sublime knows best!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add: God be pleased with the Shaykh! How great is his knowledge! Indeed, Ibn Ḥajar reports: 'Ibn al-

Munayyir<sup>21</sup> says: “The most sound [view] is that David—peace be upon him—was right in his judgement about the matter of the cultivated field and Solomon—peace be upon him—counseled reaching an accommodation. The words of God the Sublime: ‘And We gave both of them judgement and knowledge’ (21/78) may either be general or may only refer to the case of the cultivated field. According to either way of taking the sense, God is praising David in this verse for his judgement and knowledge and the sense isn’t along the lines of: ‘The one who makes an effort is excused if he’s wrong’, because error isn’t judgement or knowledge.”<sup>22</sup>

This is similar to what the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said about it, i.e. about the matter of the cultivated field. As for what he said about the three stories after that, it’s the truth without any doubt (340) which one can’t avoid. The imam al-Shāfi‘ī and Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Balkhī<sup>23</sup> and other great men besides them have indicated something similar to this in connection with a different story. But God the Sublime knows best!

[10]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of *al-sāq* (leg) in God the Sublime’s words: ‘On the day when the leg (*sāq*) will be bared’ (68/42).

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘*Al-sāq* in the Syriac language<sup>24</sup> means earnestness, i.e. the opposite of joking.’

Then I said: ‘It’s like this in the Arabic language as well. They say: “*inkashafa al-ḥarb ‘an sāq*, i.e. *‘an jidd* (war broke out in earnestness).”’<sup>25</sup> He told me: ‘This is a case of where the two languages coincide.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that I’ve never met anyone who knows Syriac and all the other languages of human beings, the Jinn, the angels and the animals,<sup>26</sup> as in al-Dabbāgh’s case.

I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the name of our lord Jesus—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—‘*Mashīkhā*’, whether it contains the letter *khā*<sup>3</sup> or *ḥā*<sup>3</sup>. He replied: ‘It contains a

<sup>21</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 148, CXXI; see here p. 790, ftn. 74.

<sup>22</sup> Not found in the *Fath*.

<sup>23</sup> Editor’s ftn. 11, I, p. 340 is incorrect: this isn’t the Sufi Muḥammad b. al-Faḍl al-Balkhī.

<sup>24</sup> What follows is dealt with in Radtke, ‘Syrisch’, pp. 472 ff.

<sup>25</sup> Al-Jawharī, *Ṣiḥāḥ* IV, p. 246: *qāmat al-ḥarb ‘alā sāq*.

<sup>26</sup> Goldziher, ‘Linguistisches’, pp. 167 f. and 187; he mentions there that *suryāniyya* is the language of the angels.

*khā'* and this is a Syriac word that means "great" in their language.'<sup>27</sup>

I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of *injil* (Gospel) and he replied: 'This is a Syriac word and it means "light of the eye" in their language.'<sup>28</sup>

(341) I asked him—God be pleased with him—about *al-tawrāh* (the Torah). He replied: 'It's a Hebrew word and it means *al-sharī'a* (the law) in their language and "the true word".'<sup>29</sup>

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the name of our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—Mushaffah, whether it contains a *fā'* or a *qāf*. On this point the religious scholars disagree.

He replied: 'It contains a *fā'* since it comes from *shafah* which means praise and is a Syriac word.'<sup>30</sup>

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the Prophet's name—God's blessings and peace be upon him—*al-manḥamannā*. The religious scholars disagree about how it should be vocalized. Some of them say with an *u* after the first *mīm* and an *i* after the second *mīm*; others say with an *a* after the first *mīm* and an *i* after the second *mīm*.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Both *mīms*, the first and the second, are vocalized with *a*. These are two words, not one word: *al-man* with *a* on the *mīm* and *sukūn* on the *nūn* is one word, and *ḥamannā* with *a* on the *ḥā'* and the *mīm* and with doubling (*tashdīd*) of the *nūn* is another word. The meaning of the first word is "benefaction" which contains external and internal gain. External gain is what's given to bodies in the world of outward shapes, while internal gain is what belongs to spirits in the spirit world. Moreover, this is benefaction of which all created beings and all the worlds have been given to drink. And there's no doubt that this is also the case with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The meaning of the second word, which is like an adjective for the first, is that the benefaction referred to has attained the ultimate goal and increased to the utmost degree. It's as if the word said about the

<sup>27</sup> In Syriac it's *mēšīhā*, at least in Eastern Syriac; the Syriac ending is correctly indicated, whereas the Arabic article *al-* is outlandish.—The explanation of the word's meaning is pure fantasy.

<sup>28</sup> Pure fantasy. The *Ṣiḥāḥ* of al-Jawharī only says *injil* is the *kitāb 'Īsā*.

<sup>29</sup> '*Al-sharī'a* (the law)' is correct, apparently by chance. The meaning 'the true word' is an invention.

<sup>30</sup> Is this based on Syriac *mēšabbah* (pass. past participle *pa<sup>c</sup>el*), which means 'praised' and is documented in the Syriac Bible? See *Konkordanz zur syrischen Bibel*, s.v. *š-b-h*). The rest is fantasy.

Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “He’s the benefaction that’s attained the ultimate goal. Nothing previous or that will follow can overtake him.” It’s a Syriac word.<sup>31</sup>

A companion of ours among the virtuous of the inhabitants of Tlemcen came to us and informed me that he heard someone who’d made the pilgrimage to the House of God tell how he visited the grave of Sayyidī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī<sup>32</sup> [in Egypt]—God give us profit through him—and the shaykh Sayyidī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī attended upon him and taught him a prayer which is as follows: ‘In the name of the greatest Creator! He is a refuge that wards off what I fear and what I am wary of. No created being has power by comparison with the power of the Creator. God restrains him with the power of His bridle. *Aḥmā ḥamaythā aṭmā ṭamaythā*. And God is powerful and mighty. *Ḥam ‘asq* is our protection; *kāf-hā’-yā’-‘ayn-ṣād* is our sufficiency. Indeed, God will give you protection against them, for He’s all-hearing and all-knowing. There’s no strength and no power save in God the Lofty, the Mighty!’

(342) And Sayyidī Ibrāhīm said to him: ‘Invoke God with this prayer and have no fear of anything.’ Our companion from Tlemcen said to me—he being the most virtuous Mecca-pilgrim and the purest merchant Sayyidī ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Ibrāhīm of the Awlād Ibn Ibrāhīm who reside in Tlemcen: ‘My brother the Mecca-pilgrim Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm, since he didn’t know the meaning of these two phrases, i.e. *aḥmā ḥamaythā* and *aṭmā ṭamaythā*, refrained from using the prayer. He said: “I don’t know what these words mean. Maybe they contain something I would dislike.” So he asked me what they meant, and I asked our Shaykh about the meaning—God be pleased with him!

And al-Dabbāgh replied spontaneously—God be pleased with him: ‘No one on the face of the earth today speaks these two phrases. How did you come by them?’ I then recounted the [whole] story. He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, Sayyidī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī is one of the greatest godly men and he’s one of the people who’ve received the great illumination.<sup>33</sup> He and those like him are the ones who speak with these phrases.’

<sup>31</sup> See Appendix, p. 928.

<sup>32</sup> On the Egyptian Sufi Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī (Dusūqī) who died 676/1277-78 cf. EI, s.n. Dasūqī. Goldziher had already remarked on his curious Suryānī arts and forms of knowledge (‘Linguistisches’, p. 176). The *Ibrīz* mentions him again in II, pp. 27 f., see here p. 592, where al-Dabbāgh, despite his respect for al-Dasūqī, declares himself to be far superior to him in spiritual rank.

<sup>33</sup> The great illumination: see Appendix, pp. 928 f.

Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘These are two phrases in the Syriac language.

As for *aḥmā*, it means: “Oh Sovereign”, and in its inner core it contains: “Oh supreme, living, eternal Sovereign of the supreme dominion!” And *ḥamaythā* refers to His kingdom, as if someone said: “Oh Sovereign of the secrets, oh Sovereign of the lights, oh Sovereign of night and day, oh Sovereign of the clouds abounding in rain, oh Sovereign of the suns and moons, oh Sovereign of bestowing and withholding, oh Sovereign of humbling and elevation, oh Sovereign of all that lives, oh Sovereign of all things!” Contained in this name is a wondrous secret which no pen and no expression will ever be capable of communicating.

As for the word *aṭmā* that he used, it’s as if someone attributed majesty, glory, coercion, domination, power and uniqueness in all these qualities to God the Sublime, and as if he said: “Oh Knower of all things, oh Empowered over all things, oh He Who wills all things, oh Planner of all things, oh Coercer of all things, oh He Who’s unaffected by weakness and in whatever affects Him one can imagine no deficiency.” And *ṭamaythā* refers to the things He disposes over freely and the possibilities within which He acts as He wishes and ordains whatever He desires. God is sublime—there is no god but He! And in this name is a secret which no pen will ever be capable of communicating. But God knows best!’

.....

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The Syriac language is the language of spirits, and the Friends of God among the members of the *Dīwān*<sup>34</sup> talk to one another in this language because of its conciseness and its conveying so much meaning (343) which one can’t express with similar words in another language.’ And I asked: ‘Can the Arabic language reach its level in this respect?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Only what’s in the noble *Qurʾān* can reach its level in this respect. Thus if the Arabic language gathered the meanings that are in Syriac and expressed them with Arabic words, it would be sweeter and more attractive than Syriac. But God knows best!’

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘All languages are prolix compared with Syriac because in every language except Syriac, speech is made up of words, not of letters of the alphabet, whereas in Syriac it’s made up of letters of the alphabet. Every letter of the alphabet in Syriac indicates a self-contained meaning. If it’s

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<sup>34</sup> *Dīwān*: see Chapter Four; and Appendix, pp. 929 ff.

joined to another letter, meaningful speech results from the two. Whoever knows what each letter stands for finds it easy to understand Syriac and he can speak it as he pleases and in this way ascends to a knowledge of the secrets of the letters. Herein is an awesome science which God has veiled from minds as a mercy unto people lest they be informed of wisdom while darkness<sup>35</sup> is [still] in their bodies and they come to perish. We beseech God for protection from this! But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The Syriac language is diffused within all languages the way water is diffused within wood, because the letters of the alphabet in every word in every language are elucidated in Syriac and in Syriac they have been given special meanings that were referred to earlier. For example, “Aḥmad” in the Arabic language indicates, if you’re informed, the particular person with this name. In the Syriac language the *hamza* with *a* at the beginning has a meaning, as does the *ḥāʾ* with *sukūn* and the *mīm* with *a*. If the *dāl* is read with *u*, it has one meaning; if it’s read with *a*, it has another meaning. The same is the case with “Muḥammad”. In the Arabic language it refers to the person with this name, whereas in Syriac the *mīm* has a meaning, the *ḥāʾ* with *a* has a meaning, the doubled *mīm* has a meaning, and the *dāl* at the end has a meaning. The same is true for “Zayd” and “ʿAmr”, for “man” and “woman”, etc., nor is this limited to the Arabic language. All the letters of the alphabet in Arabic have special meanings in the Syriac language. And so it is in every language. In the Hebrew language “al-Bāraqalīṭ”<sup>36</sup> indicates our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! But in Syriac the *hamza* at the beginning has a meaning, as do the *lām* with *sukūn* and the *bāʾ*, and so on to the last of its letters.

Indeed, Syriac is the root of all languages. The [other] languages are new arrivals after it, and the cause of their arriving after it is the general ignorance that befell the offspring of Adam. This happened because (344) the foundation of Syriac, and the basis of communicating in it, is pure knowledge devoid of any ignorance, so that the meanings of those who speak it are known before they speak. A hint concerning the communication of the meaning is sufficient for the mind of the listener. They’ve agreed that they’d indicate their meanings by means of the letters of the alphabet,

<sup>35</sup> darkness: see Appendix, p. 929.

<sup>36</sup> Where does the idea come from that *al-bāraqalīṭ* (the Paraclete) is Hebrew? The *hamza* of the article is considered part of the word.—On *bāraqalīṭ* see ThG IV, pp. 633 f.

approximately and in abbreviated form, because their purpose was to delve deeply into the meanings, not into the means of expressing them. In fact, had it been possible for them to supply the meanings without these letters, they wouldn't have contrived them to begin with. That's why no one can speak this language except the people who've experienced the great unveiling (*al-kashf al-kabīr*) and those spirits that are like them and have been created more knowing and perceptive, and the angels who have a natural propensity for knowledge (*maʿrifa*). If you see them speaking Syriac, you see how they indicate things with one or two letters, or with one or two words, which others could only indicate by means of one or two [complete] notebooks.

Now if you've grasped this, know that when ignorance became general among the offspring of Adam, this was the cause of shifting the letters from the meanings that were originally given to them and of their neglect. In order to convey the meanings it then became necessary to join letters together so that a combination known as a word would result and it would indicate a particular meaning current among the adherents of this convention. Then an awesome science was lost because of ignorance of the meanings of the letters and knowledge of their secrets. Nevertheless, if you take that word which is in the language and you want to explain its letters on the basis of what they'd meant before the [later] convention and transference, for the most part you'll find a letter among them which refers to the meaning they were transferred to because of its agreement with what was transferred, and you'll find that the remaining letters of the word refer to other meanings which the Syrians understand but others are ignorant of. For example, in the Arabic language *al-hāʾit* is taken to mean a wall around a house or around something similar, and the *hāʾ* at the beginning indicates that in Syriac. And for example, in the Arabic language *al-māʾ* (water) is taken to mean that known element, and the *hamza* at the end indicates that. Likewise, *al-samāʾ* (the sky) is taken to mean that known body. The *sīn* at the beginning indicates that. Thus if a person reflects on most names, he'll find they're like this and he'll find that most of the word's letters are superfluous and without use. But God the Sublime knows best!

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'When our lord Adam—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him as well—descended to earth, he spoke Syriac with his wife and children because it was still familiar to them and their knowledge of the meanings was pure. Thus Syriac remained in its original form among his descendants without change and alteration until the time when

our lord Idrīs (Enoch) died—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him as well! Then change and alteration affected it and the people began to transfer it from its original form and to derive (345) their own languages from it. The first language to be derived from it was the language of the Indians which is the closest thing to Syriac.’ He continued: ‘Our lord Adam—blessings and peace be upon him—spoke Syriac after his descent from Paradise because it was the language of the inhabitants of Paradise. He’d been speaking it in Paradise and brought it with him when he descended to earth.’

And I said: ‘Regarding God the Sublime’s words: “He created man and He has taught him the explanation” (55/2), the Qur’ānic commentators maintain that “man” means Adam and “the explanation” means speech in seven hundred languages, the best of which is the language of the Qur’ān.’

Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘That teaching which Adam received was true and so he knows these languages as do the other Friends of God, but he only speaks the language that he grew up with. And Adam grew up with the language of the inhabitants of Paradise—which is Syriac. But God the Sublime knows best!’<sup>37</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what he said is very attractive, and it’s not refuted by the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās which goes back to the Prophet:

‘Love the Arabs for three things: because I’m an Arab, the Qur’ān is in Arabic, and the language of the dwellers in Paradise is Arabic.’<sup>38</sup>

Al-‘Uqaylī<sup>39</sup> says: ‘There’s no foundation to this [*ḥadīth*], and Ibn al-Jawzī considers it to be among the counterfeit traditions (*al-mawḍū‘āt*).’ And I asked the Shaykh about it—God be pleased with him—and he said: ‘It’s not a *ḥadīth*, and the Prophet didn’t say this—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘If someone observes closely the speech of small children, he’ll find much Syriac in their speech. The reason for this is that learning something in childhood is like an inscription in stone. Adam—peace be upon him—spoke to his children when they were small and calmed them down in Syriac and he told (346) them the names of different kinds

<sup>37</sup> See Appendix, pp. 929 ff.

<sup>38</sup> The *ḥadīth* is included in Ibn al-Jawzī, *Mawḍū‘āt* II, p. 41; and al-Qārī, *Mawḍū‘āt*, p. 277.

<sup>39</sup> See p. 339, fn. 270.



of food and drinks in Syriac. They grew up with the language and taught it to their children, and so it continued. When change occurred in the language and it became neglected, among the adults nothing of it remained in their speech but among the children what remained of it has remained. And another secret is this. As long as a child continues breast-feeding, its spirit is connected to the Heavenly Assembly (angels). During this time the child that's breast-feeding has such dreams that if an adult beheld them, he'd dissolve. This is because of the spirit's dominance at this time [in the child] and the dominance of the body over the adult. It was already mentioned earlier that the language of the spirits is Syriac. And just as the body of the child sees the previously mentioned dreams while the spirit is dominant, so the body utters words from Syriac while the spirit is dominant.'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'Among the names of God the Sublime is the word *ugh*<sup>40</sup> which the breast-feeding child utters. And this is a name which indicates elevation and loftiness, kindness and compassion. It's as if someone said: "Oh He Who's lofty and elevated, oh He Who's compassionate, oh He Who's kind." You observe that when they wean a child, they use the name *būbū* if they talk to him about *fūl* and *hummuṣ*. In Syriac this word is used to mean sweet food. That's why the breast the child sucks is also called by this name for him. And if the child wants to evacuate its bowels, it informs its mother and says: *ʿaʿa*, which is used in Syriac for evacuating refuse from the body. The word *mūmū* is used in Syriac for something small in size but precious. That's why the pupil of the eye is designated by this word which is added to "*ʿayn*" (eye), and one then says "*mūmū*'-*ʿayn*", i.e. a small thing that contains something precious. But it would take a long time to pursue the other words from Syriac that occur in the speech of babes. God the Sublime knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'I don't know anyone at the present time among the people of the Maghrib—this being the 8th of Dhū'l-Ḥijja 1129/12 November 1717—who speaks Syriac.' Then I asked him: 'Did Sayyidī Maṣṣūr—who'd died before this—speak Syriac or not?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, he spoke it, and Sayyidī ʿAbd Allāh al-Barnāwī spoke it even better than he did.'

(347) And I asked: 'How can a person learn it?'

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<sup>40</sup> 'Ugh' as a name for God is otherwise unknown.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘By spending much time with the people of the Dīwān—God be pleased with them—for this is the only language they speak due to the abundance of its meanings, as was mentioned previously. They don’t speak Arabic except when the Prophet is present—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—out of courtesy and respect toward him since that was his language during his life in this world.’ Then I asked: ‘And did Sayyidī ‘Umar al-Hawwārī and Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj know Syriac or not?’ He replied: ‘No, they didn’t. But God the Sublime knows best!’

.....

I then asked him—God be pleased with him—about the interrogation in the grave,<sup>41</sup> whether it’s in Syriac or a different language. The ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī says in his treatise in verse:

‘Oh marvel for the eyes to behold!

The interrogation in the grave is in Syriac.’

The commentator on it says: ‘The author states, i.e. in his *Sharḥ al-ṣudūr bi-aḥwāl al-mawtā wa’l-qubūr*,<sup>42</sup> that the following occurs in the *Fatāwā* of the Shaykh al-Islām ‘Alam al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī:<sup>43</sup> “The deceased replies in Syriac during the interrogation.” The author also says: “I’ve found no authoritative chain of transmission for this.”’ The ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar was questioned about the matter and he replied: ‘Outwardly the *ḥadīth* indicates [the interrogation] is in the Arabic language, yet it’s conceivable that each person is addressed in his own language. This is plausible.’<sup>44</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, the interrogation in the grave is in Syriac because this is the language of the angels and the spirits. The interrogating angels are among the angels as well. It’s the spirit of the deceased that answers during the interrogation of the two angels and it speaks Syriac, as do all the spirits, because the spirit, once the veil of the body is removed from it, returns to its first state.’

<sup>41</sup> On the subject of interrogation in the grave: ThG IV, pp. 528-30; and EI, s.v. ‘*adhāb al-kabr*’.

<sup>42</sup> ‘Ibriziana’, p. 140, LXXIV; not found in the printed edition.

<sup>43</sup> It isn’t indicated which commentary is meant. But it’s probably the *Sharḥ Manẓūmat al-qubūr* by Ibn Khalīl al-Subkī (d. 1032/1623) which is mentioned in *Ibriz* II, p. 330; see here p. 898, fn. 14 (‘Ibriziana’, p. 150, CXXXIV).—‘Alam al-Dīn al-Bulqīnī: Šāliḥ b. ‘Umar (d. 868/1464): GAL, S II, pp. 114 f.; GAL makes no mention of any *Fatāwā*; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu‘jam* V, p. 9, mentions *al-Tajarrud wa’l-ihtimām bi-jamī‘ Fatāwā al-wālid shaykh al-islām*. The father, ‘Umar b. Raslān al-Bulqīnī, died 805/1403; GAL, S II, p. 110.

<sup>44</sup> Not found in the *Fatḥ*.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The illuminated Friend of God who’s received a great illumination (*fath kabīr*) speaks Syriac without ever having had to learn it because the spirit has dominion [within him]. And what do you think is the case with a dead person? He has no difficulty in speaking it.’

And I said: ‘Oh Sayyidī, we ask God and then we ask you to favor us with an explanation of the interrogation and response that occur [in the grave] in the Syriac language.’

(348) He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘As for the interrogation, the two angels address him with the word in Syriac: *mmarāzhū*. Its vocalization is as follows: the *mīm* is with *a* and a weak doubling (*tashdīd*), the *rāʾ* with *a*, and after that *alif* and after the *alif* a *zāʾ* with *sukūn*, after that a *hāʾ* with *u*, and then a *wāw* with *sukūn*. If one wishes, one may make the *wāw* a standing *hāʾ* and add the *ṣila*<sup>45</sup> after it. The meaning of these letters with which the deceased is interrogated is understood on the basis of the letters’ established usage in the Syriac language. The *mīm* with *a*, which is the first letter, is used to indicate all existing things and all things created. The second letter, which is *rāʾ*, is used for whatever is good among these existing things. As for the *zāʾ*, it’s used for whatever is bad among them. The *hāʾ*, which is followed by the *ṣila*, is used to indicate the sanctified Being (*al-dhāt al-muqaddasa*) which created all the worlds—He is sublime, there is no god but He!

Thus from this it’s clear that the first letter refers to all existing things, while the second letter refers to everything that’s good among them. Included among what’s good is the chief of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—all the prophets and angels—blessings and peace be upon them—the celestial books, Paradise, the [Well-guarded] Tablet, the Pen, all the lights in the heavens and the earths, and what’s on the Throne, what’s above it and below it, and other such good things. The third letter, which is *zāʾ*, refers to all the bad things and this includes Hell—God protect us from it—and every wicked, vicious being like Satan and everything that contains wickedness. The fourth letter, which is the *hāʾ* with a *ṣila*, refers to God—He is blessed and sublime!’

He continued—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s common usage in the Syriac language merely to wish certain meanings without using words to indicate them, as with an oath, posing a question, making a request, and other such things.’ And he added: ‘Here what’s meant by posing a question is the indication of the question without a letter

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<sup>45</sup> *ṣila*: a sign used to mark the elision of the spiritus lenis.

to show this. It's as if what were said was: "All existing things, the prophets, the angels, the books, Paradise, and everything that's good, as well as the satans and all the wicked things—is it God the Sublime Who created them or someone else?"

He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for the response, if the deceased is a believer, he answers the two angels (349) by saying: *mmarād'azīrahū*, and this is vocalized as follows: the *mīm* is with *a* and a weak doubling (*tashdīd*), after that the *rā'* with *a*, then *alif* with *sukūn*, after the *alif* a *dāl* with *sukūn*, then a *hamza* with *a*, after the *hamza* a *zā'* with *i*, then a *yā'* with *sukūn* and after the *yā'* a *rā'* with *sukūn*, and after the *rā'* a *hā'* with attached *wāw* with *sukūn*.

And the meaning of these letters is that the first letter refers, as previously, to all existing things and all created beings. The second letter refers to the light of our lord Muḥammad<sup>46</sup>—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and to all the lights which emanate from it, such as the lights of the angels and the prophets and the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—and the lights of the [Well-guarded] Tablet and the Pen, of Barzakh and of everything that contains light. We've explained this letter in the response with the present explanation and we explained it in the interrogation with the previous explanation, because the one responding is a member of the Prophet's religious community—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and wishes to be in his corps and to assemble under his banner. That's why by answering with this letter he intends the meaning we've mentioned. The explanation in the interrogation that it means all good things isn't a contradiction because everything good is an emanation from the light of our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

He went on—God be pleased with him: 'The third letter which is the *dāl* with *sukūn* refers to the reality of everything which was included under the letter that preceded it. It's as if [the person interrogated] says: "Our Prophet Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is true, all the prophets are true, all the angels are true, and there's no doubt in this—and everything included under the previous letter. The fourth letter which is the *hamza* with *a* refers to the sense that comes after it. The *hamza* with *a* in the Syriac language is one of the demonstrative pronouns like the words *hādhā*

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<sup>46</sup> Muḥammad is considered the starting point for creation: a widespread and dominant idea in post-classical and modern Sufism. This is already noted in Andrae, *Die person*, pp. 313 ff. Cf. 'Ismā'īl al-Walī', p. 150; 'Lehrer', p. 102; a text from the *Ibrīz* on the subject is translated in Meier, *Taṣliya*, pp. 539-41.

and *hādhihī*<sup>47</sup> in Arabic. The *zā'* which follows this is used to indicate wickedness—as previously—and included under it is the fundamental darkness from which all darkness emanates. This letter signifies the opposite of what the second letter signifies. Included in it is Hell and everything that contains darkness and wickedness. The *rā'* with *sukūn* refers to the reality of everything included under the letter before it, which is the *zā'* with *i* written plene and *yā'* with *sukūn*. The *hā'* with *ṣila* refers to the Lofty Essence in so far as He's Creator, Sovereign, independent in action, coercive, and free in choosing. The gist of the meaning of the response is: "All things that exist as well as our Prophet, and he's real, and all the prophets, and they're real, and all the angels, and they're real, and all (350) the lights, and they're real, and the punishment of Hell, and it's real, and all wickedness, and it's real—God the Sublime is their Creator and their Sovereign, and He disposes over them independently, and He alone freely chooses in their regard—He has no opponent and no partner, and no one rejects His dominion!"

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'If the deceased gives this proper answer, the two angels—blessings and peace be upon them—reply: "*nāṣir*", which is vocalized as follows. The *nūn* at the beginning is with *a* followed by an *alif*, and after the *alif* comes *ṣād* with *i* and after the *ṣād* comes *rā'* with *sukūn*. Its meaning is understood on the basis of the usage established for its letters in Syriac. The first letter, the *nūn* with *a* followed by an *alif*, indicates the light which resides in the body and is ablaze in it. The second letter, the *ṣād* with *i*, is used for indicating earth, and the *rā'* with *sukūn* indicates the reality of the previous meaning. So then the meaning of this word is: the light of your faith which resides in your earthen body, i.e. whose origin is of earth, is correct, true and appropriate, and contains no doubt. And this is close to the Prophet's words in the *ḥadīth*: "Sleep soundly! We know whether you possess certitude."<sup>48</sup> But God the Sublime knows best!"

[11]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether or not the words in the Qur'ān which the religious scholars disagree about are

<sup>47</sup> The Syriac demonstrative pronoun: could al-Dabbāgh have heard that in Syriac the affixed *ā* can be the definite article?—Rather unlikely.

<sup>48</sup> *Concordance* VII, p. 48; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Musnad* VI, p. 345.

Syriac.<sup>49</sup> Among them is: *asfāran*. Al-Wāsiṭī<sup>50</sup> says in the *Irshād*: ‘This means books in Syriac.’ But Ibn Abī Hātim<sup>51</sup> has published that al-Ḍaḥḥāk<sup>52</sup> says: ‘This means books in Coptic’, which al-Suyūṭī repeats in *al-Itqān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān*.

(351) He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s Syriac and means books, as al-Wāsiṭī says—God have mercy on him! And the significance of the word is: these are the good qualities of things which a human being can’t support. The *hamza* with *a* refers to what follows it—as mentioned previously—and the *sīn* with *sukūn* is used for the good qualities of things, and the *fā’* with *a* is a name for what a human being can’t support, and the *rā’* with *a* is another reference to those good qualities. So it’s as if God says: “Verily, books contain these good qualities which can’t be supported.” But God the Sublime knows best!’

Another such word is *al-rabbāniyyūn*. Al-Jawālīqī<sup>53</sup> states: ‘Abū ‘Ubayda<sup>54</sup> says: “The Arabs aren’t familiar with *al-rabbāniyyūn*, and I think the word is Hebrew or Syriac.”’ And Abū’l-Qāsim [al-Suyūṭī] asserts that it’s Syriac. He says this in the *Itqān*.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The word is Syriac and its meaning is: those on whose behalf God has disclosed knowledge without study. It’s composed of three words: *rabbā*, *nī* and *yūn*. The explanation of the first word is that the *rā’* with *a* refers to the great amount of good which the doubled *bā’* indicates. It’s as if God says: “This is a great amount of good.” The explanation of the second word is that the *nūn* with *i* refers to closeness. The explanation of the third word is that the *yā’* with *u* refers to something which doesn’t remain in a fixed state, like lightning and light. And the *nūn* with *a* refers to the good which resides in the body and is ablaze in it. So it’s as if God says: “This is the good which is near to Me and which is in the bodies of the people of illumination—a light from among the lights and a secret from among the secrets. It resides in their bodies and is ablaze in them.” But God the Sublime knows best!’

49 What follows is taken from al-Suyūṭī, *Itqān* I, 38th *naw’*, pp. 135 ff.—*asfāran*: *Itqān*, p. 136.

50 Abū Muḥammad ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abd al-Mu’min al-Wāsiṭī; died 741/1341; GAL, S II, p. 211; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu’jam* VI, pp. 79 f.

51 Ibn Abī Hātim al-Rāzī; died 327/938; GAS I, pp. 178 f.

52 Ḍaḥḥāk b. Muzāḥim; died 105/723; GAS I, pp. 29 f.

53 *Itqān* I, p. 138.—Al-Jawālīqī: Mawḥūb b. Aḥmad (d. 539/1144); GAL I, p. 280; author of the *Mu’arrab min al-kalām al-‘ajamī*; our passage occurs there on p. 72; ‘Ibriziana’, p. 140, LXXV.

54 Abū ‘Ubayda; died between 207/822 and 213/828; GAS VIII, pp. 67 ff.

(352) Another one of them is *hayta laka*. Ibn Abī Ḥātim has published from Ibn ʿAbbās: ‘*Hayta laka* means *halumma laka* in Coptic.’ Al-Ḥasan [al-Baṣrī] says: ‘This is in Syriac.’ And Ibn Jarīr [al-Ṭabarī] has published this as well. ʿIkrima says: ‘This is in Ḥawrāniyya.’<sup>55</sup> Abūʾl-Shaykh<sup>56</sup> has published the same. And Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī<sup>57</sup> says: ‘This is in Hebrew. Its root is *hytalāh*, i.e. come on!’ Al-Suyūṭī says the same in the *Itqān*.<sup>58</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘It isn’t Syriac. But God the Sublime knows best!’

Another one is *shahr*. Al-Jawālīqī says: ‘Some philologists say it’s Syriac.’<sup>59</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘It isn’t Syriac. In the language of the Syrians *al-shahr* is a name for water.’ I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that whoever is familiar with the explanation of the letters has no doubt about this. But God the Sublime knows best!

Another one is ʿ*adn*. Ibn Jarīr [al-Ṭabarī] mentions that Ibn ʿAbbās asked Kaʿb [al-Aḥbār]<sup>60</sup> about the *jannāt al-ʿAdn* (gardens of Eden). Kaʿb replied: ‘*Jannāt* means grapevines and grapes in Syriac.’ And Ibn Jarīr mentions in his Qurʾānic commentary that it’s in Greek (*al-rūmiyya*). Al-Suyūṭī repeats this in the *Itqān*.<sup>61</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is Syriac.’ And he presented a lofty discourse in explanation of the word.

Another word is *rahwan*. Regarding God the Sublime’s words: ‘Leave the sea becalmed (*rahwan*)’ (44/24), al-Wāsiṭī says: ‘It means calm in Syriac.’ And Abūʾl-Qāsim [al-Suyūṭī] says: ‘It means level in Coptic.’ Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s Syriac and the word indicates power which can’t be resisted. Thus if we say So-and-so is *rahw*, it means irresistably powerful. And if we say this comes from people who are *rahw*, it means from people against whom no one can prevail.’ I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the meaning in this case is clear. Whoever is familiar with the explanation of the word’s letters has no doubt concerning what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! But God the Sublime knows best!<sup>62</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Apparently this refers to the language of Ḥawrān (cf. EI s.n.), a region in Syria, but what that language would be isn’t clear.

<sup>56</sup> Abūʾl-Shaykh: died 369/979; GAS I, pp. 200 f.

<sup>57</sup> Abū Zayd al-Anṣārī: died 215/830; GAS VIII, pp. 76-80.

<sup>58</sup> *Itqān*, p. 140.—Al-Suyūṭī’s source is the Qurʾān commentary of al-Ṭabarī; *Jāmiʿ* XII, pp. 106-08.

<sup>59</sup> *Itqān* I, p. 139.—Cf. al-Jawālīqī, *Muʿarrab*, p. 93.

<sup>60</sup> Kaʿb al-Aḥbār: died 32/652 or later; GAS I, pp. 304 f.; cf. EI s.n.

<sup>61</sup> *Itqān* I, p. 139.—Al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* X, p. 125.

<sup>62</sup> *Itqān* I, p. 138.—Views about *rahw* in al-Ṭabarī, *Jāmiʿ* XXV, pp. 72 f.

I questioned him myself about words of this kind—God be pleased with him! He gave me answers about them, but I’ve omitted to record them here for fear of being tedious and wearisome. When I heard the explanation of every letter of (353) the previous Syriac words from him, I realized the answers he gave me concerning the earlier words such as *Mushaffah*, *Mashikhā*, *al-injīl*, *al-manḥamanna* and *aḥmā ḥamaythā*, etc., were merely approximate. I then asked him—God be pleased with him—to give me an explanation of every word on the basis of the established usage of its letters. So he then explained all of that—praise be to God—word by word and letter by letter. This I’ve omitted, however, for fear of being tedious. But God the Sublime knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘Only the Support (*al-ghawth*) and the seven Pivots (*al-aqtāb*) who are under him know the Syriac language. And it was Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh who taught me Syriac in approximately one month. That was in the year 1125/1713.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I heard him say these words on the 14th of Dhū’l-Ḥijja 1129/18 November 1717. Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh, the person he meant here, was the Support before him, as mentioned earlier. It will be discussed later how he was one of the ten from whom the Shaykh inherited [spiritually]—God be pleased with him! At the end of Dhū’l-Qa°da in the year 1129/October 1717 he also inherited from another man among the great Friends of God, as I heard from him, and the name of this Friend was Sayyidī Ibrāhīm Lamlaz—the *mīm* with *sukūn* between the two *lāms* with *a*, and *zā°* at the end. This is the way the Shaykh vocalized the name—God be pleased with him! That time when Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh was teaching him Syriac was at the beginning of his illumination, and he taught him Syriac because he knew he’d become a Pivot. In fact he became a Pivot shortly after this. What indicates that only the elite Friends of God our Shaykh referred to—God be pleased with him—knew Syriac are the texts that will be presented from the eminent Friends—God be pleased with them—on how to interpret the opening letters of the surahs. These texts will demonstrate this point.

Moreover, al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—taught me the foundation of the usage of the letters in the Syriac language on the 8th of Dhū’l-Ḥijja 1129/12 November 1717 and—praise be to God—I understood it in one day. He said—God be pleased with him: ‘I only learned Syriac after one month and you’ve learned it in one day.’ I kissed his noble hand—God be pleased with him—and



said: 'This is thanks to your blessing and because of how well you impart an understanding of things. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[12]

And one day I was talking with him at the end of Ramaḍān in the year 1129/August 1717 about the explanation of: 'If the sun becomes rolled up' (81/1). (354) And I asked him about the well-known view that every word in the Qurʾān has an external and an internal aspect.<sup>63</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'That's true and God the Sublime's words: "If the sun becomes rolled up" has an external and an internal aspect. Its external aspect speaks about its end, and its internal aspect speaks about its beginning.' And I asked: 'What do you mean by "the end"?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'What will occur in the assembling on the Day of Resurrection. And by "the beginning" we mean what occurred in the world of the spirits.' He then spoke a while about the world of the spirits, and I heard from him the wonder of wonders and he mentioned things that dazzle minds, things that are secrets of God and can't be written down.

Then regarding Qurʾānic verses whose external aspect occurs in the world of the spirits such as: 'And when your Lord took their progeny from the descendants of Adam, from their loins' (7/172), I asked him: 'And where's its internal aspect?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'That which occurred in the pre-eternal knowledge of God and the primordial preordaining.'

And I asked him what was the meaning of the internal aspect of Qurʾānic verses like God the Sublime's words: 'The hypocrites are in the lowest level of Hell-fire' (4/145).

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The darkness which was in the world of the spirits and out of which Hell arose—God preserve us from Hell! And the hypocrites have a station in it that resembles their station in Hell, i.e. their spirits have a station in that darkness which resembles the station of their bodily shapes in Hell. We beseech God for safety!' And I asked: 'Is there a means of knowledge of this internal aspect?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It's only grasped by means of unveiling. But whoever knows Syriac and the secrets of the letters, this helps him greatly to understand the internal aspect of the Qurʾān and he then knows what's in the world of the spirits, what's

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<sup>63</sup> internal aspect: see Appendix, pp. 932 f.

in the here and now, and what's in the hereafter, what's in the heavens and in the earths, what's on the Celestial Throne, and other such things. He knows that the meanings of the noble Qur'ān which he refers to are without any end. And he knows the meaning of God the Sublime's words: (355) "We have not neglected anything in the Book" (6/38). But God the Sublime knows best!

[13]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about whether the noble Qur'ān is written on the Well-guarded Tablet in the Arabic language.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, but part of it is in Syriac.' I asked: 'What part is that?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The opening letters of the surahs.' I said: 'This is the cherished object I've sought for years.' That is to say, when I first met him—God be pleased with him—in Rajab in the year 1125/August 1713—praise and gratitude unto God—and I talked with him in intimacy and I asked him about matters connected with Friendship with God, I heard things from him that dazzled me. When he saw that I found his answers good, he said—God be pleased with him: 'Ask me about whatever occurs to you.'

[14]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the openings of the surahs.<sup>64</sup> I asked him: 'What's the meaning of: "*Ṣād*. By the Qur'ān containing the Recollection!" (38/1)?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'If people knew the meaning of *ṣād* and the secret it refers to, no one would ever dare oppose the command of his Lord.' But he didn't explain it to me.

After that I asked him about the meaning of *kāf-hā'-yā'-ʿayn-ṣād* and he answered me: 'It contains a wondrous secret. Everything recounted in the surah *Mary* about the story of our lord Zacharias, our lord John, Mary and her son Jesus, Abraham and Ishmael, Isaac and Jacob, Moses and Aaron, Idris, Adam and Noah, as well as the whole story recounted in the surah after that, is contained in the meaning of *kāf-hā'-yā'-ʿayn-ṣād*. And what's left over of its meaning is still greater than what's mentioned in the surah.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'These signs are written on the Well-guarded Tablet and each sign has its explanation written with it. Moreover, the shapes of the signs are immense and their

<sup>64</sup> Letters at the beginning of surahs: cf. EQ, s.v. *Mysterious Letters*; al-Lamaṭī's explanation isn't included there.—The general Islamic view is that only Arabic is contained in the Qur'ān. But there are other views as well. Al-Suyūṭī reports on the discussion in *Muzhir* I, pp. 266-68.

explanation is sometimes written above the shapes, other times below them, and sometimes in the middle.'

(356) He said—God be pleased with him: 'You can only compare this to what the notaries (*'udūl*) do when they designate what's left by a dead person.<sup>65</sup> When they designate it and take it all in, they levy tax on it with letters above it in the script of the register. The opening letters of the surahs are like this script and what's in the surah is like the explanation of it. This is the normal practice of the Well-guarded Tablet which expounds by means of symbols and then engages in explaining them. When it finishes with these, it goes on to expound by means of other symbols and then explains these. And so it continues. The explanation is written on the inside of the letter if it's a *ṣād* for instance. That's why the letter appears so large on the Well-guarded Tablet, roughly the distance of a day's journey—a little more or a little less.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Only two [categories of] men know what's contained in the opening letters of the surahs: the man who can see the Well-guarded Tablet and the man who frequents the Dīwān of the Friends of God, the people with the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*)<sup>66</sup>—God be pleased with them! Aside from these two men, no one else has a hope of understanding the opening letters of the surahs.'

Regarding *alif-lām-mīm* at the beginning of *The Cow* and at the beginning of the surah *The House of 'Imrān*, I asked him—God be pleased with him: 'Do both of these refer to a single thing or does each one have a different meaning?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Rather they both have a different meaning. Each of them is explained by the content of its surah.' I heard these words from him during the period when I first met him. And I understood that he was one of the greatest Friends of God—God be pleased with him—because I saw how the greatest Sufis treated the opening letters of the surahs and indicated some of what the Shaykh mentioned—God be pleased with them! They've made it clear that only the Friends of God who are Tent-Pegs (*al-awṭād*) of the earth know the meaning of the opening letters of the surahs. For me here was a powerful proof of this majestic lord's Friendship with God—God give us sustenance through his love and

<sup>65</sup> *mutakhāfi'l-halāk*: makes no sense; the text appears to be corrupt. Read: *mutakhallaf al-hālik* with MSS Būlāq and al-Azhariyya; but text and sense remain uncertain.

<sup>66</sup> people with the power of free disposal: *ahl al-taṣarruf*. On *taṣarruf* cf. Meier, *Naqṣbandiyya*, in particular Part Two, pp. 245 ff.

let us attain the sciences he made appear to us! Moreover, he wasn't engaged in pursuing any of this, neither in his mature years nor in his youth. He never even read the Qur'ān and only knew by heart a few surahs from the *ḥizb* 'Sabbih'. But if you heard him speak by way of explaining a Qur'ānic verse, you'd hear the wonder of wonders. What follows are texts of the greatest Sufis—God be pleased with them—that bear witness to his Friendship with God and to everything the Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him!

(357) Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī says in the *Nawādir al-uṣūl*—God be pleased with him: 'In the opening letters of the surahs there's an indication of what's contained in the surah. Only God's wise men (*hukamā'*) on His earth and the Tent-Pegs of His earth understand it. They've reached God by means of it. They've obtained this wisdom and *they* are the outstanding ones among the wise. They're the people whose hearts have reached God's uniqueness (*fardāniyya*). They derive this science from singleness (*fardiyya*) and it's the science of the alphabet's letters. With these letters one can express all the sciences, and by means of the letters God's names appeared so that people could express them in languages.' This is transmitted by the Friend and Knower of God Sayyidī Abū Zayd 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Fāsī—God have mercy on him—in his *Hāshiya* on *al-Hizb al-kabīr* of the Friend of God and great Pivot Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī—God give us profit through him!<sup>67</sup>

He also says in the *Hāshiya*: 'Someone has said: "Knowledge of the letters and the names belongs to the special characteristics of the sciences of the prophets, in so far as they're Friends of God. For this reason both Friends and prophets have a share in it. This is one of the sciences of unveiling. Nor are the resources of reason an advantage for acquiring mastery over it. Rather he who knows it isn't ignorant of it, and he who isn't ignorant of it knows it. Each one knows it in accordance with what's been disclosed to him. That's why those who possess it differ regarding it, and among them there's a difference as far as what they indicate about it. '...watered with the same water, and We gave some of them more fruits than others' (13/4).'"<sup>68</sup>

And he also says in the *Hāshiya*: 'Al-Wartaḥī states in his *Tafsīr*: "The individual letters are signs for the meanings of the surahs of the Qur'ān, and only the divinely guided scholars (*al-rabbāniyyūn*) know what these signs mean.'"<sup>69</sup>

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix, p. 932.

<sup>68</sup> Text in al-Fāsī, *Sharḥ*, p. 72, ll. 3-9.

<sup>69</sup> Text in al-Fāsī, *Sharḥ*, p. 74, ll. 3-4.—The printed edition of al-Fāsī has al-Wartaḥī; unidentified.

Sayyidī °Abd al-Raḥmān, the author of the *Hāshiya*, says: ‘Against this view it’s objected that one particular sign has appeared in numerous forms with different meanings, as for instance *alif-lām-hā-mīm* and suchlike. It’s answered that the sign participates in various meanings.’<sup>70</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, must say: look at this imposing testimony from these great men! Indeed, he cites in (358) the *Hāshiya* other passages from Sayyidī °Abd al-Nūr, Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Sulṭān, and Sayyidī Dāwūd al-Bākhillī as a commentary on the litany (*hizb*) known as *Hizb al-baḥr* by our lord, the shaykh Abū’l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī. But look at these passages in the *Hāshiya* and you’ll understand the rank of this great imam [al-Dabbāgh]! God cause us to attain the truth through love of him!<sup>71</sup>

As for what I heard from him about the beginning of the surahs, I remained without understanding their special meanings until the 8th of Dhū’l-Hijja 1129/12 November 1717 when I heard from him what was mentioned above, namely that a part of the Qur’ān is written on the Well-guarded Tablet in Syriac. Moreover, that part is the opening letters of the surahs.

I then asked him to reply to me with a separate explanation of each opening and to give me a commentary on all these signs. And—praise be to God—he did answer me in this regard. Let’s indicate [at least] some of his answer, for only another separate work could contain it all. Thus we proceed by saying:

.....

As for *ṣād*, he said by way of explaining it—God be pleased with him: ‘What’s meant by it in this surah is the space in which the people and all creatures will be gathered on the Day of Assembly. It’s mentioned in the Qur’ānic verse in the form of promise and threat, as if God were to say: “Verily, that with which I cause fear in you and that with which I announce to you glad tidings is *ṣād*”, that is to say the space varies in accordance with what the deeds of every one of the bodies requires. You’ll see that it’s a form of punishment for the infidel and a form of mercy for the believer alongside him. And for another infidel standing alongside this believer there’s a punishment—not the same kind as for the first infidel but a different kind. And for another believer standing alongside this believer

<sup>70</sup> Text in al-Fāsī, *Sharḥ*, p. 74, ll. 5 f.

<sup>71</sup> °Abd al-Nūr and Muḥammad b. Sulṭān: al-Fāsī, *Sharḥ*, p. 73, l. 7. Muḥammad b. Sulṭān is referred to as a disciple of al-Shādhilī.—Dāwūd al-Bākhillī: al-Fāsī, *Sharḥ*, p. 75, l. 7. In our printed edition *al-Balkhī*; on him see ‘Two Sufi Treatises’, p. 150.

there's a mercy—not the same kind of mercy as for the first believer but a different kind which his deeds require. And so it continues until everyone in the assembly is dealt with. In it you won't find any confines (*hayyiz*) at all that resemble [spatial] confines, even though it's one [continuous] space to the eye and in conformity with the natural conditions of the world. A person who's received illumination sees this directly. He sees Zayd in his space in accordance with what's been written for him. And he sees 'Amr in his space in accordance (359) with what's been written for him. And it's as if they were now standing before God—He is mighty and glorious! This is why we said: "If people knew the meaning of *ṣād* and what it refers to, no one would dare oppose God's command—He is mighty and glorious!"

Now if it were disclosed to people what their location was in this space, the obedient person would be delighted and the transgressor would die of grief. It's clear that this space will contain the infidels and the believers, the prophets and the angels, and the Jinn and the satans. Indeed, God refers to the infidels at the beginning of the surah by mentioning groups of them, and to the prophets by mentioning groups of them. He refers to the believers by mentioning them while mentioning the prophets, and to the angels when He mentions the Heavenly Assembly at the end of the surah. And He mentions their states in the world, even though these states don't adhere to them in the final gathering. For it's these that cause the difference between their states in that space where they're gathered.

And there are still other secrets connected with what's in the surah which it isn't permitted to divulge. But God the Sublime knows best!

.....

As for *kāf-hā'-yā'-'ayn-ṣād*, its meaning can only be grasped after an explanation of each of its letters separately. The *kāf* with *a* is used to signify the bondsman (human being). The *fā'* with *sukūn* (on the *kāf*) confirms the meaning of *fā'* with *a*. It contains what *fā'* with *a* contains as well as confirmation and acknowledgement. And the meaning of *fā'* with *a* is something that can't be sustained. It's as if the *fā'* with *sukūn* says: its being unsustainable is true without any doubt. And the *hā'* with *a* is used to indicate cleansed, pure mercy that has no admixture of turbidity or anything else. And the *yā'* is for calling. The *'ayn* with *a* is used to indicate departure and transference from one state to another. The *yā'* with *sukūn* (on the *'ayn*) here indicates involvement and mingling. The *nūn* with *sukūn* (on the *'ayn*) confirms the *nūn* with *a*, and its meaning is the good that resides in the body and is ablaze in it. The *ṣād* with *a* is used to

indicate space, and the *dāl* with *sukūn* (on the *ṣād*) confirms the meaning of the *ṣād*, because it's one of the demonstrative letters. The demonstrative letters confirm the meanings that precede them, in contrast to letters that aren't demonstrative. When these letters occur with *sukūn*, they confirm the meanings of letters with *a*. This is an explanation of the letters in accordance with what their usage demands.

As for what the letters mean here, they're a communication from God the Sublime to all creatures about the standing of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the loftiness of his station with God the Sublime. And God the Sublime indicates that He's been gracious to all creatures by seeing to it that their lights are provided from this noble Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The clarification of this is in the previous explanation: (360) the *kāf* indicates that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is a human being (*ʿabd*), and the *fāʾ* with *sukūn* indicates something unsustainable and that his being unsustainable is true without any doubt. Furthermore, the meaning of his being unsustainable is that he's left created beings incapacitated. Nothing before or after can overtake him. That's why he's the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The *hāʾ* with *a* indicates that he's a cleansed, pure mercy that purifies everything else. As God the Sublime has said:

“We have only sent you as a mercy for human beings” (21/107).

And the Prophet said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: “I'm a mercy that's been bestowed on mankind.”

And *yāʾ* is a call to the said human being (*ʿabd*). What he's called to is the journey indicated by the *ʿayn* and confirmed by the meaning of the *yāʾ* with *sukūn*, for the latter is one of the demonstrative letters and the demonstrative letters are for confirmation as previously mentioned. Now the demonstrative letter informs of the necessity of the journey and involvement in it. The means by which one travels is the meaning of the *nūn* with *sukūn*, and this is the light of existence by which existing things exist. And that to which one travels is the meaning referred to by the *ṣād*. So then what the words mean is: “Oh you human being who are dear to Me, go your way inevitably, necessarily, and bring to everyone who's within some confines (*ḥayyiz*) and space the lights by which their existences exist so they receive assistance from you. For everyone's assistance (*mādda*) comes from you.”

The meanings of the letters have been arranged in a beautiful arrangement and the ordering of the words displays the utmost

harmony. This is because the meanings of letters in Syriac are like the meanings of words in other languages. Just as speech in other languages is made up of words and isn't correct unless the meanings of the words are in the right order, so speech in Syriac is made up of letters and is only correct if the meanings of the letters are in the right order. And some of the letters exercise a restraint upon others. And just as speech when it's made up of words in a language other than Syriac necessarily arranges the meanings of its words, placing one before and another behind, and inserts something foreign in between two meanings that go together, and leaves out something which the correct meaning depends on, so in Syriac speech is made up of letters and it may be necessary to arrange some of the meanings of the letters before and others behind, and to shorten something and leave it out, and do other such things.'

(361) He said—God be pleased with him: 'What we've made use of to explain the meanings of these signs is known to those in the know through unveiling and direct vision. They behold the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and they behold what God—He is mighty and glorious—has bestowed on him and what his Lord has honored him with that no one but he can sustain. And from among the creatures besides him they behold prophets, angels and others, and what thaumaturgic gifts God has bestowed on them. And they behold the assistance diffused from the lord of existence to every creature in threads of light that take from his light and extend to the bodies of the prophets and the angels—blessings and peace be upon them—and the bodies of other creatures as well. And they behold the wonders and the marvels of this provision of assistance.'

.....

He said—God be pleased with him: 'One of the godly men took hold of a piece of bread intending to eat it. He contemplated it and the blessing it entailed for the offspring of Adam.' He said: 'He then saw in that bread a thread of light and followed after it with his sight. He saw that it joined a thread of light that joined the Prophet's light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And he saw that the light that joined the noble light was one. Then after it extended a bit, it began to branch out into threads. Every thread was joined to one of the blessings [contained] in these bodies.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that al-Dabbāgh is the person referred to in this story. God be pleased with him and make us one of his party and his followers, and let there be no separation between us and him!



He said—God be pleased with him: ‘It so happened that one of those whom God has forsaken—we beseech God for protection from this—said: “I only receive guidance to the faith from our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! As for the light of faith, that comes from God—He is mighty and glorious—not from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!” The godly men said to him: “Would you approve if we cut the connection between the light of your faith and his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and left you solely with the guidance you mentioned? Would you accept that?” He replied: “Yes, I’d accept it.”’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘He’d scarcely finished speaking when he prostrated himself before the cross and ceased to believe in God and in His Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And he died in unbelief. We beseech God for protection from this—through His grace and His generosity!’

.....

In sum, the Friends of God the Sublime who know Him—He is mighty and glorious—and know the rank of God’s Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—behold everything that’s been mentioned with direct vision the way they behold all sense perceptions, nay even more powerfully because seeing by means of deeper vision (*baṣīra*) is more powerful than seeing with the eyes (*baṣar*).’ This will be dealt with later in the book. ‘And so they behold our lord Zacharias—peace be upon him—as well as his states and his stations with respect to God—He is mighty and glorious—which extend from the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—to our lord Zacharias—blessings and peace be upon him! And it is the same with regard to everything mentioned in the surah about (362) our lord John—blessings and peace be upon him—and his states and his stations, about Mary and her states and her stations, about Jesus and his states and his stations, and about Abraham, Ishmael, Moses, Aaron, Idrīs, Adam, and Noah, and about every prophet upon whom God has bestowed favors.

And this is some of what’s contained in these signs. What they contain besides this is a number too great to be reckoned. That’s why we said what’s contained in the surah is only a small part of what the signs contain. Indeed, all existing things—those with speech as well as the mute, those with reason as well as those without, that which has a spirit as well as that without a spirit—all of them are contained in these signs.’

And when I heard this explanation from him—God be pleased with him—I asked him about what Abū Zayd [al-Fāsī] transmits

from Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Sulṭān in the previously mentioned *Hāshiya*. The text is: ‘Sayyidī ‘Abd al-Nūr transmits from Sayyidī Abū ‘Abd Allāh b. Sulṭān, who was one of the disciples of al-Shādhilī—God be pleased with him—that he said: “I saw in a dream that I had a disagreement with some learned jurists about the explanation of God the Sublime’s words: ‘*kāf-hā*’-*yā*’-‘*ayn-ṣād*’ and ‘*hā*’-*mīm*’-‘*ayn-sīn-qāf*’ and God caused it to pass my lips”—or he said: “I said: ‘There are secrets between God the Sublime and His Apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! It’s as if God said: “*Kāf*—you’re the cave (*kahf*) of existence where every existing thing takes refuge. You’re the whole of existence. *Hā*’—We’ve bestowed on you this world (*mulk*) and We’ve prepared for you the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*). *Yā*’ ‘*ayn*—oh source of sources! *Ṣād*—My attributes are you! ‘Whoever obeys the Apostle obeys God’ (4/80). *Hā*’—We’ve protected you. *Mīm*—We’ve given you dominion. ‘*Ayn*—We’ve instructed you. *Sīn*—We’ve confided secrets in you. *Qāf*—We’ve made you draw near.”’” And he added: “But they disputed with me about this and wouldn’t accept the explanation from me. I said: ‘We’ll go to the Apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—so that he may judge between us.’ So we went and we found the Apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and he said to us: ‘What Muḥammad b. Sulṭān says is the truth.’”’

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The import of what Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Sulṭān said is true with regard to the Prophet’s station—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! What we’ve said is the explanation of these letters in accordance with their usage and what their basic principle requires.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the loftiness of the Shaykh’s explanation—God be pleased with him—is perfectly clear for you. On the other hand, the bestowal of this world (*mulk*) and the preparation of the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*) would both imply [their] separateness from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and that they hadn’t emanated from him. What a difference between this (363) and [the fact that] the world, the Celestial Realm, and all created things are included under the *ṣād*! Then his having power over all things is based on their assistance (*mādda*) coming from the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—which accords with what the letters *nūn* and ‘*ayn* require. This is the meaning of his being ‘the cave of existence in which every existing thing takes refuge’. Thus everything that

Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Sulṭān indicated—God be pleased with him—is contained under the *nūn*, the *‘ayn* and the *ṣād*.

.....

Then I heard from him—God be pleased with him—the explanation of all the opening letters, group by group, sign by sign, but it isn’t possible to write down all of this because of its length. Here I’ll only mention two answers that the Shaykh gave—God be pleased with him! The first is in response to a question put to him along with a number of questions by one of the jurists (*fuqahā’*) who’s said to have loved the *fuqarā’*.

The text of the question is: ‘And one of them, oh Sayyidī’, i.e. one of the questions, ‘is: What’s the divine secret deposited in a separate letter *qāf*, such that one of the knowers of God said about it: “In it the secret of the sphere of the eternal plane (*al-ḥaḍra al-qadīma*) and the contingent plane (*al-ḥaḍra al-ḥāditha*) come together.”? Clarify this for us, oh Sayyidī.’ And his purpose with these questions was to test the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—as to whether what was ascribed to him of the divinely bestowed sciences was true or not. This jurist had looked in the books of [Ibn al-‘Arabī] al-Ḥātimī and others, and collected questions he thought no one could answer. And these questions he put to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

Al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—answered all the questions, despite his being an unschooled layman. And he answered the above question—God be pleased with him—by saying: ‘The eternal plane is the plane of the contingent lights which were created before the creation of the spirits and bodily shapes, and before the creation of the heavens and the earths. Here the meaning of eternity (*qidam*) is not eternity in its reality, which was when there was only God and nothing else with Him. And the meaning of the contingent plane is the spirits and the bodily shapes which came after the eternal plane. Without any doubt, to this plane of the spirits with the bodily shapes belongs what God has promised by way of Paradise, as well as what God has threatened by way of Hell-fire. Moreover, what God has promised by way of Paradise branched off from some of the lights of the plane of lights, just as what God has threatened by way of Hell-fire branched off from some of them. So the second plane became an offshoot from the first plane, and the matter among the two planes was divided into what’s pleasing to God and what isn’t pleasing to Him.

Now if you’ve understood this, [well and good]. But from the point of view of its pronunciation, this separate letter [the *qāf*] contains three letters, one called *qāf*, one called *alif*, and one called

*fā'*. The one called (364) *qāf* is attached to the one called *alif* and is used in Syriac for God the Sublime's action in the two planes by means of good and bad, and by means of kindness and justice. The one called *fā'*, if it's with *sukūn*, is used in Syriac for removing the base from what precedes it. The base in both planes is someone who has been threatened with evil and if the one threatened with evil is eliminated from both planes, the one who was promised the good remains in both. These are God's elite—may He be blessed and exalted!

Thus this separate letter is an indication of God the Sublime's elite in both planes, and of the good things He's bestowed on them—He is mighty and glorious! This is the secret of the two planes and it's one of the names of God the Sublime which is attributed to what He holds dearest among created beings—may He be blessed and exalted! It's similar to our saying "*sulṭān*" in Arabic. This word refers to the ruler and his subjects, whether the subjects are people of felicity (saved) like the Muslims or people of wretchedness (damned) like the *dhimmīs*.<sup>72</sup> If the intention is to praise the ruler, he's called "*sulṭān of Islam*". By adding "*Islam*" the *dhimmīs* are excluded by way of politeness, respect and reverence, though they're not excluded in reality. The *qāf* is as if someone says: "Oh Lord of Muḥammad and of the prophets and the angels and the people of felicity", and so on until you've dealt with all of them, all of their stations and their states with God the Sublime, and until you've dealt with the dwellers in Paradise and all their levels and their degrees in it. If you've dealt with it and haven't even left out a single hair of it, that's the meaning of *qāf*. So the *qāf* contains the secrets of apostleship, the secrets of prophethood, the secrets of the angels, the secrets of Friendship with God, the secrets of felicity (salvation), the secrets of Paradise, the secrets of all the lights, and all good things which occur among all created beings.

"No one knows the armies of your Lord but He" (74/31).

Moreover, it's customary practice in Syriac not to write the *fā'* (of the *qāf*) which eliminates what precedes it, so that the script and the meaning are alike. That's why you write *q* [and not *qāf*]. But God knows best!

And al-Dabbāgh said—God the Sublime be pleased with him: 'If you wish to use "the eternal plane" in the sense of what has preceded in [God's] pre-eternal knowledge (*ilm*), i.e. the real meaning of "the eternal plane", and to use "the contingent plane" in the sense of the

<sup>72</sup> *dhimmī*: a free non-Muslim subject living in a Muslim country.

known things (*ma'lūmāt*) which He brought into being—He is mighty and glorious—and made emerge in this world, you're entitled to do so. In any case, the meaning remains the same. But God the Sublime knows best!

(365) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add the following. Look at how beautiful this answer is—God give you success! Moreover, I met with the person who posed the question and I asked him: 'What's your view of the Shaykh's answer—God be pleased with him—?' He replied: 'What the shaykh Zarrūq has said is that the eternal plane is the circle of the *qāf* [as written in Arabic], whereas the contingent plane is the loop underneath the circle. The secret contained in this is the reference to the contingent receiving assistance from the eternal, in as much as the loop is joined to the ring which we've called the circle and its connectedness refers to the contingent receiving assistance from the eternal. Thus the surah *Qāf* refers to the two planes—to the eternal plane by means of its circle and to the contingent one by means of its loop. And the connectedness of the loop to the circle refers to the contingent's receiving assistance from the eternal.'

I replied: 'But how far this is from what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! The question was about the meaning of *qāf* which is a word. What you've just said has to do with the script, not with the word. The word "*qāf*" has no circle and no loop. Moreover, what you said doesn't deal with the meaning of the eternal plane and the contingent plane. So what relation is there between the circle and the eternal plane? And what relation is there between the loop and the contingent plane? If it's merely a matter of connectedness, this exists with regard to the circle of the *mīm* and its loop, and with regard to the *ṣād*, the *dād*, the *ʿayn*, the *ghayn*, and other letters that contain a circle and a loop.'

The questioner remained silent and didn't know what to say. Nor is this opposition on my part to the shaykh Zarrūq—God be pleased with him—for verily, I seek refuge with God from opposition to him or to any other Friends of God—God give us profit through their sciences! I discussed with the questioner and followed what he had to say but I'm not informed about the views of the shaykh Zarrūq—God be pleased with him—and I don't know what they are. Perhaps the questioner reported the sense to me without going into it with precision, and for that reason it met with opposition. But God the Sublime knows best!

.....

As for the second answer, it concerns the difficulty referred to by Sayyidi ʿAbd al-Rahmān al-Fāsī, the author of the *Hāshiya* which was previously mentioned—God give us profit through him!

(366) The gist of it is: How do you explain the oneness of the sign and the multiplicity of the surahs? If the opening letters are signs for the contents of their surahs, this would require a diversity of signs similar to the diversity of the surahs.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The reason for the surahs being varied, while the signs are a unity, is that the lights of the Qurʾānic verses are of three kinds. The white, and this is what bondsmen (people) say and what they ask for from their Lord—He is mighty and glorious! The green, and this is what God says—He is exalted! And the yellow, which is connected with the circumstances of those who are the object of God’s wrath (*al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim*). In the *Fātiḥa* the green light is: *al-ḥamdu li’llāhi* (praise be to God) because God says this—He is sublime and exalted! And the white light goes from: *rabbi’l-ʿālamīn* (Lord of the worlds) up to: *ghayri’l-maghḍūb* (those who aren’t the object of His wrath). And the yellow light goes from: *al-maghḍūb ʿalayhim* to the end. These three lights are found in every surah to a lesser or greater extent, as you see in the *Fātiḥa*.

The reason for this variation of the three lights is the variation of the three aspects of the Well-guarded Tablet. The Tablet has an aspect which is oriented toward the world, i.e. connected with the world and the states of its inhabitants. In it is recorded everything that pertains to the world and its inhabitants. And the Tablet has another aspect oriented toward Paradise. In it are recorded Paradise’s circumstances, the states of its inhabitants and their qualities. And the Tablet has another aspect oriented toward Hell, and in it are recorded Hell’s circumstances, the states of its inhabitants and their qualities—God protect us from Hell and its punishment! The aspect oriented toward the world has a white light, the one oriented toward Paradise a green light, and the one oriented toward Hell a yellow light. The latter is in reality black but in the eyes of the believer it becomes yellow because if the light of his sight falls on something black, it makes it yellow in his eyes. Thus if the believer is in the final gathering [of the Resurrection] and he possesses the penetrating light that’s been foreordained for him and at a distance from him there’s an infidel surrounded by great blackness and much darkness, the believer sees him as yellow and he knows that this visible figure is the figure of an infidel.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘As for the infidel, he doesn’t see anything. He’s veiled by the darkness which encloses him from every direction. Thus he sees only blackness upon blackness.’

I asked: ‘Consequently, he isn’t touched in his heart by anyone in the final gathering except those who resemble him, and he doesn’t see that the believer is in any way better than himself, nor does he wish he’d been a Muslim in the world?’

(367) Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘God the Sublime creates for him the requisite knowledge about Paradise and the circumstances of its inhabitants.

If you’ve understood this, [then know as well] that if the Qur’ānic verse is taken in its aspect oriented toward Paradise, its light is green. If it’s taken in its aspect oriented toward Hell, its light is yellow. And if it’s taken in its aspect oriented toward the world, its light is white. Moreover, in every one of these aspects there are details and subdivisions which only God the Sublime grasps. And these opening letters at the beginning of the surahs are written on the Well-guarded Tablet, just as they’re written in a copy of the Qur’ān. But along with every letter among them is written an explanation of the letter in Syriac. If you saw what’s been written in explanation of the opening letters, you’d understand their diversity.

Now the clarification of this is that *alif-lām-mīm* are signs that refer to the light of the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—from whom all created beings receive assistance. If this light, which is referred to by the sign in question, is considered with respect to the fact that some created beings believe in it and others do not, and what the states are of those who believe in it and what the states of those who do not, and what else is connected with this, and what can be said about it—that’s what’s discussed in the surah *The Cow*, and the surah was sent down with this content. If it’s considered with respect to the good things the people obtain from it and how they obtain these things and mention of those who’ve obtained them, that’s what’s discussed in the surah *The House of Imrān*, and the surah was sent down with this content. And if it’s considered with respect to the revenge sent down upon his opponents and what they were afflicted with in this world and other such things, that’s what’s discussed in the surah *The Spider*. And the same can be said about every surah which is introduced by the intermediary of this sign.

He who’s seen it directly on the Well-guarded Tablet understands what we’ve said.’

Then I brought forth a question concerning the *maqām*,<sup>73</sup> and he answered me in such a way that minds can't sustain. For this reason we haven't written it down. But God the Sublime knows best!

.....

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is an indication, from a great distance, regarding what the Shaykh related—God be pleased with him! As for the precise determination of the meaning of what he indicated and attaining to its completeness, it can only be grasped through illumination (*fath*) or by means of the Shaykh's oral instruction—God be pleased with him! If the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—set about explaining the meanings (368) and a questioner questioned him about everything that occurred to him, the person would arrive at the meaning in its entirety, even if he weren't among those who've received illumination. But God the Sublime knows best!

[15]

Here it seemed proper to me to write down the foundation of the usage of the letters in the Syriac language because there's a need for it. Much has previously been translated by us on the basis of this. So let's mention it for the sake of making the benefit complete. Thus we say:

As for the *hamza*, if it's with *a*, it indicates all things, be they small or great. In some instances the speaker is indicating his own body or himself, and this designation isn't subject to contraction. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of something nearby and small. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of something nearby and appropriate.

As for *bā'*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of something of the greatest magnificence or of the greatest humbleness. If it's with *i*, it's an indication of what's entered or is inside the body, and if it's with *u*, it's an indication that it entails contraction.

As for the *tā'*, if it's with *a*, it's a name for an abundant, great good. If it's with *i*, it's a name for what's made and brought forth, and if it's with *u*, it's a name for something small that emerges and it may be used to join together opposites.

As for the *thā'*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of light or darkness. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of one thing withdrawing from another. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of placing one thing upon another.

As for the *jīm*, if it's with *a*, it's prophethood or Friendship with God—if something precedes or follows it which indicates this.

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<sup>73</sup> This apparently means the Prophet Muḥammad's lofty station (*maqām*) previously referred to on p. 442 top and p. 445 middle.



Otherwise, it indicates the good which never ceases. If it's with *u*, it indicates something good which is eaten or from which people derive a benefit. If it's with *i*, it's the small good in the body which comes from the light of faith.

(369) And another time al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'If it's with *i*, it indicates small, weak good or it indicates light.'

As for the *hā'*, if it's with *a*, it indicates comprising and embracing the totality. If it's with *u*, it's the huge number beyond [the number of] mankind such as the stars. And if it's with *i*, it's a number which comes under the body's scope or which the body has charge over, as for instance slaves, dinars and dirhems, and other such things.

As for the *khā'*, if it's with *a*, it's forbearance to the end with compassion. If it's with *u*, it's a name for perfection in animals, and if it's with *i*, it's a name for perfection in inorganic things.

As for the *dāl*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication for outside the body. If it's with *i*, it's an indication of what's inside the body or of what enters it or what's close to it. And if it's with *u*, it's an indication of what's small or bad, and it entails anger toward the two.

As for the *dhāl*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of what enhances that thing which the body possesses. If it's with *u*, it's a name for the coarse thing in its body, or the great or the bad. And if it's with *i*, it's a name for the bad thing which anger doesn't pursue of its own accord.

As for the *rā'*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of all good things, visible and hidden. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of what's one in itself and apparent as such. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of something which has spirit in it and doesn't belong to mankind, or an indication of spirit itself.

As for *zā'*, if it's with *a*, it's a name for something which harms the thing it enters. And one time he said it was a name for the thing and whatever one must be on guard against. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of the bad that contains harm in it, such as grave sins. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of the bad which doesn't contain harm in it, such as minor sins, doubts and impurity.

(370) As for the *ṭā'*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of something whose kind is pure and limpid in the extreme, and in its body it's also pure and limpid in the extreme. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of what's bad in the extreme, the opposite of the previous. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of something whose nature possesses repose or which has been ordered to be in repose.

As for *ḡā'*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of something which is great in itself and possesses none of its opposite, such as generosity

among the *sharīfs* and deception among the Jews. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of a thing which follows the movement of its carnal soul (self) and the soul strives after the thing's destruction. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of something which does harm to the bondsman and it's in its nature to do harm.

As for the *kāf*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of the reality of perfect servitude [to God]. If it's with *u*, it's the black or the wicked slave. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of ascribing servitude [to God] to yourself.

And another time he said: 'It's an indication from yourself that attributes servitude to yourself.'

As for the *lām*, if it's with *a*, the speaker will obtain something great and it's an indication of something great. If it's with *i*, it's an indication on the speaker's part of his own existence or of his body—that is if it's pronounced 'softly'. If it's pronounced emphatically, it's an indication that entails anxiety. And another time he said: 'It entails shamefulness.'

As for the *mīm*, if it's with *a*, it's all existing things. If it's with *i*, it's the light of the body—visible as if in the eye and hidden as if in the heart. And if it's with *u*, it's something precious and small like the liquid of the eye, and it's called *mūmū*.

As for the *nūn*, if it's with *a*, it's the good which resides in the body and flares up in it. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of the perfect good or the gleaming light. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of something which the speaker reaches or something which reaches the speaker.

(371) As for the *ṣād*, if it's with *a*, it's all the dust of the earth in the waiting place before God—He is mighty and glorious! If it's with *i*, it's the seven earths. And if it's with *u*, it's all the plants on earth—that is, if the *ṣād* is pronounced 'softly'. If it's pronounced emphatically with *a*, it's the earth which God's wrath has afflicted or which has no plants on it. And if it's pronounced emphatically with *i*, it's a body without any plants on it or a body which has no good in it. And if it's with *u*, it's what brings us harm from the previous two things.

And another time he said: '*Ṣād* with *a* is an indication of all the land and everything on it for the distance of one *farsakh*.<sup>74</sup> With *u* it's all lands and whatever is dust. And with *i* it's the plants on the surface of the earth. And if it's pronounced emphatically, it's an indication of God's wrath upon these things—He is mighty and

<sup>74</sup> About three and a half miles or the distance one can travel in an hour.

glorious!’ This second point I copied from his own manuscript—God be pleased with him—after his death. The first one I heard from him orally. The wording in the second one is his own—God be pleased with him!

As for the *ḍād*, if it’s with *a*, it expresses health and absence of affliction. If it’s with *u*, it’s an indication of something which contains no light or contains no darkness. And if it’s with *i*, it expresses humility.

As for the *‘ayn*, if it’s with *a*, it’s a name for arriving and departure. If it’s with *u*, it’s a name for that which resides in the body, and through which the body exists. And if it’s with *i*, it’s a name for the wickedness of the body.

This I heard from him—God be pleased with him—but the following is in his manuscript:<sup>75</sup> ‘The *‘ayn* with *a* is an indication of that which consents. With *u* it’s an indication of something which benefits and harms as it wishes. And with *i* it’s bad servitude [to God].’ This is close to (372) the first words because the one who consents is blameworthy. And that which resides in the body and through which the body exists, such as the spirit and the memory, gives benefit and does harm—by the leave of God the Sublime—and bad servitude is wickedness of the body and its darkness.

As for the *ghayn*, if it’s with *a*, it’s a name for sight by which the reality of a thing is attained. If it’s with *u*, it’s one of God’s names—He is exalted—and it indicates His compassion. And if it’s with *i*, it answers a question about something [the questioner] doesn’t know with something he does know. This is what I heard from him—God be pleased with him!

In his manuscript—God be pleased with him: ‘The *ghayn* with *a* is an indication of something which by its nature wards off anything that approaches it. With *u* it’s an indication of compassion, veneration and perfect magnificence. And with *i* it’s an indication of something he said with a word he doesn’t understand, and this is an indication of something that’s unknown.’ And both these versions are close to one another.

As for the *fā’*, if it’s with *a*, it’s denial that something is bad after its category is known as bad. And it’s an indication that the thing is pure, whereas its category is bad. The bad is like sins and other such things. If it’s with *i*, it’s an indication of the body and what it contains, and at times it may entail decrease. And if it’s with *u*, it’s removal of the bad.

<sup>75</sup> Further evidence that al-Dabbāgh wasn’t illiterate.

As for the *qāf*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of attaining the good things or all lights. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of the original coming into being or eternal knowledge and things such as this. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of lowliness.

As for the *sīn*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of something beautiful which by its nature possesses delicacy. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of something ugly and coarse, or an indication of black in terms of sense perception and significance. And with *i* it's an indication of something that leaves an impress [in the character] and the indication comes from the thing itself. And this is what's in his manuscript—God be pleased with him!

(373) The following is what I heard from him—God be pleased with him: 'The *sīn* pronounced "softly" with *a* is a name for the good qualities of things. With *u* it's a name for black in terms of sense perception and significance. And with *i* it's a name for the kernel of the body and its secret, consisting of perfect reason, forgiveness and clemency.' And both these versions are close to one another.

As for the *shīn*, if it's with *a*, it's an indication of mercy which isn't followed by punishment, and it refers to someone who felt malice but mercy came over him and he was purified. If it's with *u*, it's an indication of someone lofty in himself who enjoys esteem. And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of something which by nature is covered up and it may refer to what's covered up in the heart and other things like that. This is what occurs in his manuscript—God be pleased with him—but what I heard from him—God the Sublime have mercy on him and give us benefit through him—is the following. The *shīn* with *a* is mercy which isn't followed by punishment. With *u* it's what minds are perplexed by or what does harm to the eyelids such as a speck of dirt and similar things. And with *i* it's what was tread upon by a limb or a foot and wasn't visible or what was hidden in the heart and wasn't visible.

As for the *hā'*, if it's with *a*, it's pure mercy without any limit. If it's with *u*, it's one of the names of God—He is exalted! And if it's with *i*, it's an indication of the good which emerges from the bodies of created beings. This is what occurs in his manuscript—God be pleased with him!

What I heard from him—God be pleased with him—is the following. The *hā'* with *a* is purified mercy without any limit. With *u* it's one of the names of God—He is exalted—and it contains the vision (*mushāhada*) of all existing things. This is in contrast with the *nūn* with *u* which is like someone who says: 'My Lord (*rabbī*).' The *hā'* with *u* is like someone who says: 'Lord of the worlds (*rabb al-*

‘*ālamīn*’.) And with *i* it’s all the light that emerges from the bodies of the believers.

As for the *wāw*, if it’s with *a*, it’s the things that are intertwined in a human being such as veins, fingers and other things like that. If it’s with *u*, it’s the things that are separate from Adam’s offspring such as celestial spheres, mountains and other things like that. And if it’s with *i*, it’s intertwining things which are considered unclean and detested such as intestines and similar things.

(374) As for the *yā’*, if it’s with *a*, it’s for proclaiming (the vocative) and it may be for emphasis. This is what I heard from him—God be pleased with him—but what occurs in his manuscript is the following. The *yā’* with *a* is for proclaiming and sometimes for reporting which contains a proclamation such as: ‘He does not beget’ (*lam yalid*). This is reporting which contains a proclamation. If it’s with *u*, it’s an indication of something that isn’t fixed such as lightning and similar things. And if it’s with *i*, it’s an indication of something that one feels ashamed about or recoils from in shame such as one’s private parts.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘These are the secrets of the letters. Each one of the letters possesses seven secrets which originate in accordance with the previous meanings, and each possesses seven other secrets which correspond to the Arabic language. And if the word isn’t Arabic, the letter corresponds to other secrets. God grant us success and teach us the rank of our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! This was written by ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Mas‘ūd al-Sharīf, known as al-Dabbāgh.’ Taken from his own manuscript—God be pleased with him!

Now consider—God have mercy on you—whether you’ve heard anything like this or seen it written in a compendium! But God the Sublime knows best!

In the month that I met al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—and spent time with him, or a little thereafter, he told me three words from Syriac and said to me: ‘Retain these words and see that you don’t forget them!’ And they were: *sinar*, *sidh‘u* and *māzar*, i.e. *sīn* with *i*, *nūn* with *a* and then *rā’* with *sukūn*; then *sīn* with *i* followed by *dhāl* with *sukūn* and ‘*ayn* with *u*; and then *mīm* with *a* followed by *alīf*, and *zā’* with *a* and *rā’* with *sukūn*.

I asked him—God be pleased with him: ‘What language is this?’ And he replied: ‘Syriac. I don’t know anyone on the face of the earth who speaks it, that is to say there are very few.’

I asked: 'What do these words mean?' But he didn't explain their meanings to me. Since you've learned the foundation of the usage of the letters in Syriac, it's clear to you that he said to me: 'Look at this light residing in my body and flaring up in it, which is in my exterior and in my interior! Look at this immense good (375) which my body possesses and through which it exists! By means of it all existing things are cleansed of evil. Whatever visible and hidden good things are in the heavens, on the earth, and in all the worlds, receive support from this light which is in my body.' Thus al-Dabbāgh informed me that he has the [supernatural] power of free disposal within all the worlds. But God the Sublime knows best!

[16]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And that God may know who are the believers and take witnesses from you' (3/140). As well as about God the Sublime's words: 'Verily, We will test you so as to know which of you struggles and which of you is steadfast' (47/31). And I questioned him about other such passages which [seem] to indicate that God the Sublime acquires new knowledge, whereas God's knowledge—He is exalted—is eternal, and the eternal isn't something new.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Qur'ān has been sent down in accordance with people's usage in their speech. Imagine that a king has someone who's closer to him than anyone else and the king entrusts him with looking after his subjects. The king remains hidden from the eyes of the people and imposes on the subjects obedience to his close attendant. And he distinguishes him, allowing him to enter unto him, whereas no one else among the subjects may come before him. The close attendant comes forth from the king with [orders] concerning what the subjects must do by way of obedience and service to the king. When he sets about implementing the king's orders, he tells the people: "The king has this order for you. He demands this and that from you, and desires that you do such-and-such." This then becomes a habit of the close attendant whenever he addresses anyone, even when he speaks about his own affairs and not the king's business. He says: "Come forth with the king to such-and-such a place and undertake such-and-such a task with him!" But here he means himself. This is because of the unity that's come to exist between himself and the king. And undeniably this is known usage of the people. Now this is the case here with the knowledge attributed to God—He is mighty and glorious! It isn't new knowledge but rather what's meant is

attributing it to the Apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

Then he said lofty things—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of God the Sublime’s words: ‘Those who swear allegiance to you in truth swear allegiance to God. God’s hand is over their hands’ (48/10).

(376) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this answer is different from the answer given by the commentators on this verse. It contains an omission of something that should be added, i.e. ‘So that the Apostle may know.’ But God the Sublime knows best!

[17]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the matter of the cranes (*gharānīq*). I asked him: ‘Is °Iyāḍ and those who follow him right in denying it, or is the ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar right in affirming it?’

The text of Ibn Ḥajar’s words is: ‘Ibn Abī Ḥātim, al-Ṭabarī and Ibn al-Mundhir<sup>76</sup> published it with [different] chains of transmission from Shu’ba<sup>77</sup>—from Abū Bishr<sup>78</sup>—and from Sa’id b. Jubayr who said: “The Apostle of God recited—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘Have you considered al-Lāt and al-°Uzzā and al-Manāt<sup>79</sup> the third one?’ (53/20). Then Satan cast upon his tongue: ‘These lofty cranes—their intercession can be hoped for.’ And the polytheists remarked: ‘He’s never said any good about our gods before today!’ He then prostrated himself and they prostrated themselves.”’

Ibn Ḥajar then mentions al-Bazzār’s<sup>80</sup> publication of the story and what he says against it along with what follows, up to where he says: ‘Abū Bakr b. al-°Arabī was bold in his usual fashion. And he says: “Al-Ṭabarī mentions many reports about it that have no foundation.” But this statement is to be rejected. And it’s the same with °Iyāḍ’s words: “None of the persons who publish authentic *ḥadīths* has published this one and no trustworthy person has reported it with a sound, unbroken chain of transmission—given the weakness of its transmitters, the confusion (377) in its reports and the interruption in its chain of transmission.” And so it is with his words: “None of the Followers (*tābi°ūn*)<sup>81</sup> and Qur’ānic commentators who transmitted

<sup>76</sup> GAS I, p. 495; died 318/930.

<sup>77</sup> GAS I, p. 92; died 160/776.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 376.

<sup>79</sup> Three pagan deities worshipped in Mecca before the triumph of Islam.

<sup>80</sup> GAS I, p. 162; died 292/905.

<sup>81</sup> The generation of the successors to the Companions of the Prophet.

this story provide it with a chain of transmission and trace it back to a Companion. Most of the chains of transmission they give for it are weak.” And he says: “Al-Bazzār explains that no chain of transmission is known which one can trace back to the Prophet except that of Abū Bishr—from Sa‘īd b. Jubayr—though there’s doubt about its unbroken connection. As for al-Kalbī,<sup>82</sup> it isn’t permitted to transmit from him because he’s very weak.” And then he rejected it on the basis of rational speculation (*naẓar*). He said: “Had this occurred, many who accepted Islam would have renounced it. But this hasn’t been reported.”<sup>83</sup>

Ibn Hajar says: ‘None of this is compatible with proper principles. Indeed, if there are numerous chains of transmission with different starting points, this shows that the story has a foundation. And we’ve stated that three of its chains of transmission fulfill the conditions of “authentic”. They’re *mursal* (interrupted) traditions and those who argue with *mursal* traditions argue with traditions like these, as well as those who [normally] don’t argue with them, except when the one of them supports the other. Now if this has been established, an explanation is required for whatever occurred in it that’s worthy of disapproval.’ And in this regard he mentions six explanations. Consult these in Ibn Hajar.

When this story was confirmed, he made use of it to explain God the Sublime’s words: ‘We sent no apostle and no prophet before you except that Satan cast into his wish when he wished’ (22/52).

And he reports from Ibn ‘Abbās<sup>84</sup>—God be pleased with the two of them—that he explains ‘he wished’ (*tamannā*) as ‘he recited’ (*qara’a*), and ‘his wish’ (*umniyyatihī*) as ‘his reciting’ (*qirā’atihī*). He says: ‘This refers to the matter of the cranes which was mentioned previously.’ And he reports from al-Naḥḥās:<sup>85</sup> ‘This is the finest, the most splendid and the loftiest explanation given for the Qur’ānic verse.’<sup>86</sup> And I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘In your view what’s correct in this regard and what are we to adopt from you concerning this difficult matter?’

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Ibn al-‘Arabī and ‘Iyāḍ, and those who agree with them, are right regarding the story, and Ibn Hajar isn’t right. Nothing to do with the question of “the cranes” ever happened to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be

<sup>82</sup> GAS I, p. 34, no. 14; died 146/763.

<sup>83</sup> *Faṭḥ* IX, p. 367.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. *Drei Schriften I, fihris al-iṣṭilāḥāt*, s.v. *m-n-w*.

<sup>85</sup> GAS I, p. 367; died 338/950.

<sup>86</sup> From: ‘None of this is compatible...’ occurs in *Faṭḥ* IX, p. 367, last line ff.



upon him! At times I'm amazed by the words of some religious scholars, words like those that issue from Ibn Ḥajar and people who agree with him. If anything like this happened to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—confidence in the *sharī'a* would be removed and the effect of [the Prophet's] protection from sin would be annulled. The Apostle would become like any other individual among the people, since Satan would have power over him and his words such that he could add to them something the Apostle didn't wish and didn't like and approve of—God's blessings and peace be upon him! In view of this distressing situation what confidence would still remain in apostleship? Nor is it enough to reply that God cancels whatever Satan "casts", and corrects the Qur'ānic verses. After all, it's always possible that these [new] words are also from Satan, (378) for just as it was possible for him to have power over revelation by adding something in the matter of "the cranes", it would also be possible for him to have power over revelation to add this complete verse to it. In that case there would be doubt about all the verses of the Qur'ān. It's incumbent on the believer to avoid *ḥadīths* like these which cause this kind of doubt in religion and to reject them completely. With regard to the Apostle—God's blessings and peace be upon him—let them believe what's obligatory about his perfect protection from sin and that the loftiness of his rank—blessings and peace be upon him—is of such a degree that there's no degree above it.

Moreover, according to what they say in their interpretation of God the Sublime's words: "We sent no apostle and no prophet before you..." (22/52), Satan must have power over the revelation of each and every apostle, and each and every prophet who ever existed, in addition to his power over the noble Qur'ān, because of God the Sublime's words: "...no apostle and no prophet except that Satan cast into his wish when he wished." In their interpretation the verse demands that this is Satan's regular practice with God's prophets and His elite from His creation—but no doubt exists about the falsity of this view!

I, al-Lamaṭī, would point out—God be pleased with the Shaykh—how perspicacious is his reasoning, despite his being formally unschooled!

Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī says<sup>87</sup>—God have mercy on him: 'It's said that *tamannā* means *qara'a* and *umniyyatihī* means *qirā'atihī*, and that Satan cast into it, i.e. he raised his voice and said "the

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<sup>87</sup> *Anwār al-tanzīl* II, p. 93.

cranes” so that those listening thought it was part of the Prophet’s recitation—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! This is refuted by the fact that it violates confidence [in the Qur’ān] and [the problem] isn’t removed by His words: “But God annuls what Satan casts and then corrects His verses” (22/52), because they imply that this is also possible.’ Such is the gist of what he says, though the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—expatiated on it at length in his answer.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the subject of *tamannā* (he wished) refers back to the apostle and the prophet in general which preceded it but it isn’t possible for Satan to cast the matter of ‘the cranes’ into the wish of every one of them. Moreover, you know—(379) God have mercy on you—that [the Prophet’s] protection from sin is one of the basic beliefs which demands certainty. Thus a *ḥadīth* which teaches that his sinlessness can be penetrated and violated is unacceptable in whatever way it’s transmitted. The scholars of jurisprudence (Uṣūliyyūn) consider that a report of this description is a report which must be declared false.

As for the view of the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar—God have mercy on him—namely that the *ḥadīth* provides an argument for those who argue with *mursal* traditions as well as those who don’t argue with them, because of their relying on what’s reported by three true chains of transmission—the answer to this is that it’s only sufficient for opinion about practical matters to do with ‘permitted (*ḥalāl*)’ and ‘forbidden (*ḥarām*)’. When it comes to matters of religious learning and belief, the single report (*khabar al-wāḥid*)<sup>88</sup> is of no use in establishing certainty about them. So how could it be of use in denying them or destroying them? Thus it’s clear that what ‘Iyāḍ says isn’t contrary to proper principles. Rather what the *ḥāfiẓ* says—God have mercy on him and be pleased with him—is contrary to such principles, because he wishes to make use of a *khabar al-wāḥid* to destroy the tenets of faith, and this is contrary to proper principles.

The same is true about his interpretation of *tamannā* as *qara’a* and *umniyyatihī* as *qirā’atihī*, and that this has been transmitted from Ibn ‘Abbās and that it’s the best, the most splendid and the loftiest explanation of the verse.

And the answer to this is that the report about it from Ibn ‘Abbās stands in the transcript of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa<sup>89</sup> from Ibn ‘Abbās, and it

<sup>88</sup> On this subject see van Ess, *Īcī*, p. 414.

<sup>89</sup> GAS I, p. 22.

was reported by °Alī b. Abī Šāliḥ,<sup>90</sup> the scribe of al-Layth,<sup>91</sup> from Mu°āwiya b. Šāliḥ<sup>92</sup>—from °Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa—from Ibn °Abbās. Now it's well known what the people say about Ibn Abī Šāliḥ, the scribe of al-Layth, and that those who are precise in their studies declare him to be weak. But God the Sublime knows best!

Then I asked the Shaykh—God have mercy on him and give us benefit through him: 'In your view what's right as an explanation of God the Sublime's words: "We sent no apostle and no prophet before you except that Satan cast into his wish when he wished" (22/52).—? And what's the verse's light which the verse indicates?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Its light which it indicates is that God the Sublime didn't send any apostle and didn't dispatch any of the prophets to one of the religious communities except that the apostle in question wanted the faith (380) for his community, wished it for them, aroused interest in it, and he desired it with the greatest desire and he influenced them toward it with the strongest influence. And one of them in this endeavor was our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—to whom the Lord said—He is sublime and exalted: "But perhaps you'll kill yourself following after them in grief if they don't believe in this account" (18/6). And God the Sublime said: "Most of the people don't believe even though you desire it" (12/103). And God the Sublime said: "Will you then coerce the people, until they become believers?" (10/99). And there are other verses containing this sense as well. Yet the religious community is at variance, as God the Sublime has said: "But they fell into variance, and some of them believed and some of them disbelieved" (2/253).

As for someone who disbelieves, Satan has cast doubts in him which diminish apostleship for him and bring about his unbelief. And similarly, the believer isn't without doubts because in most cases doubts accompany faith in the unseen, even if they occur to a greater or a lesser extent among people and in accordance with circumstances.

If this is established, then the meaning of *tamannā* is that an apostle wants his religious community to possess faith, he wishes the good for them as well as right guidance, probity and success. And this is the wish (*umniyya*) of every apostle and prophet, and Satan's casting into it consists of the particular doubts he casts in the hearts of the summoned community that cause the unbelief of some of

<sup>90</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 380; *Siyar* X, pp. 405 ff.

<sup>91</sup> See p. 326, ftn. 224.

<sup>92</sup> GAS I, p. 27; *Siyar* XIII, p. 23; died 263/876-7.

them. Meanwhile, God has mercy on the believers and annuls this in their hearts and confirms in them the verses which indicate divine unicity (*waḥdāniyya*) and apostleship. But God—He is mighty and glorious—causes this to remain in the hearts of the hypocrites and the infidels so that they're led astray by it. The result is that, to begin with, doubts are cast into the hearts of both groups. However, doubts don't persist among the believers, whereas they persist among the infidels.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that in my view this explanation is the most marvelous one I've heard. This is only clear if one gathers together some of the explanations that have been given about the verse and then examines them in comparison with the Shaykh's explanation—God be pleased with him!

**The first explanation** is what was mentioned previously in the transmission by Ibn Abī Ṣāliḥ, the scribe of al-Layth b. (381) Sa<sup>c</sup>d. Likewise, the contradiction it contains to religious doctrine has been discussed above, as well as its contradiction to the generality found at the beginning of the verse. Indeed, he explains the verse in connection with the matter of 'the cranes'. The wording is general, being applied to every apostle and prophet.

**The second explanation:** Abū Muḥammad Makī<sup>93</sup> reports: 'Al-Ṭabarī says: "*Tamannā* means *ḥaddatha nafsahū* (he said to himself) and then Satan by way of deception cast something into his speech, saying: 'If you were to ask God to give you booty, the Muslims would then become well-off.' But God knew that the good was other than this. Thus God nullifies what Satan casts. And al-Farrā<sup>9</sup> and al-Kisā<sup>9</sup>i transmit that *tamannā* means *ḥaddatha nafsahū*.'"'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that it's clear what this contains, and how can it be correct that Satan practices deceit on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—since the Prophet possesses pure deeper vision (*baṣīra*) from which all existence is lit up? Likewise, what he says doesn't correspond with the generality found in the beginning of the verse, nor with the explanation found at the end of it, as is clear.

**The third explanation:** al-Bayḍāwī says: "*Illā idhā tamannā*"—if he embellishes in his soul what he's fond of, "Satan casts into his wish", i.e. into his desire, something that causes his being distracted by the world, as he's said—blessings and prayers be upon him: "Verily, a cloud covers my heart and I ask God for forgiveness seventy times in one day..."<sup>94</sup>—up to the end of what he said, which

<sup>93</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 381; died 437/1045.

<sup>94</sup> *Anwār al-tanzīl* II, p. 93.

doesn't accord with the context of the verse, nor with the transcendence of the station of apostleship.

In sum, the correct interpretation of the Qur'ānic verse must do justice to three matters: the generality found at the beginning of the verse, the explanation given at its end, and it must render apostleship its due. However, as far as I'm aware, this is only the case with the Shaykh's interpretation—God be pleased with him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[18]

(382) And I also asked him—God be pleased with him—about the difference of opinion between 'Iyāḍ and Ibn Ḥajar—God have mercy on both of them—concerning the story of Hārūt and Mārūt.<sup>95</sup> Indeed, the first of them rejects the *ḥadīths* which have come down about this and declares them to be invalid.<sup>96</sup> The second confirms the story and says: 'It's transmitted with various chains of transmission so that if someone is familiar with them he can't help but be certain about the correctness of the story and will declare that it did happen.' The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī follows him and presents many chains of transmission for it in his book *al-Ḥabā'ik fī akhbār al-malā'ik*.<sup>97</sup> He says in this work that he treats exhaustively the chains of transmission for it in his large *tafsīr*.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him and give us benefit through him: '“Iyāḍ is right in this matter—God have mercy on him!’ And he told me secrets which can't be written down and revealed. Peace!

[19]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And He sends down from the heavens mountains in which is hail' (24/43). I asked him: 'Are there mountains of hail in the heavens, as some Qur'ānic commentators say?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'No such thing is in the heavens. The meaning of “the heavens” in the verse is what's above you. It's as if God says: “He sends down from the upward direction”, and the mountains of hail are in the upward direction. The winds carry them from the earth toward the said direction.'

The reason for my asking him about this verse—God be pleased with him—is that a question reached me about the origin of snow, i.e. what it comes from. The question contained many parts, and I didn't know what to reply to it. Therefore I presented it to the

<sup>95</sup> Cf. EI and EQ, s.n. Hārūt wa-Mārūt.

<sup>96</sup> *Shifā'* II, p. 644.

<sup>97</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 141; LXXVII. *Ḥabā'ik*, pp. 63-67.

Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and he gave me answers concerning all its parts, and I wrote them down in my answer. Let's state the question here as well as the answer, so that in this way the benefit may be complete.

The text of the question: 'Praise be to God! My distinguished lords—God continue the benefit to mankind through you—(383) give your answer concerning the origin of snow. Does it come down as such from its place in congealed form or is it water which the winds cause to congeal? And what's its place that it comes down from? Is it from the heavens or from rain clouds? Or is it from a suspended sea in the heavens, as is said with regard to rain, or from something else? Why is it peculiar to cold regions and not to other regions? Why is it peculiar to the mountains alone and not found in the flat parts of the earth? But even if it does fall in the earth's plains, it only stays a short time compared with how long it stays in the mountains. We see that sometimes it comes down in a burst mixed with rain and other times it comes down alone, which is the most frequent case. Then the separation between a warm area and a cold one may be small, for instance six miles or less. And each of the two is distinguished by what's peculiar to it. Is there a cause for this or not? And why is cold peculiar to the mountains and not peculiar to the plains? Then lightning only comes down in cold regions, in the mountains and places with trees, in contrast to where the earth is flat, level and warm like the Sahara. The people inhabiting the latter place say they don't know any lightning and that it doesn't descend among them. Why is lightning peculiar to one region but not to another. What's the secret in this? Give us an unequivocal answer.'

The text of the answer: 'Praise be to God alone, and God's blessings be upon our lord Muḥammad and upon his family and his Companions! The answer—God gives success in attaining what's right through His grace—is that snow is water which the winds have caused to congeal. It originates chiefly from the encompassing ocean, and the water of the encompassing ocean is endowed with three special characteristics that aren't found apart from it. 1) Extreme cold because of its proximity to the winds and its distance from the heat of the sun. That's why it congeals for the least cause. 2) Extreme limpidity because it's water has retained its original nature and hasn't mixed with any earthen substances. It's an ocean which is borne aloft by eternal divine omnipotence and it doesn't rest on the earth or on anything. 3) Extreme remoteness because the distance between us and it consists of the greatest remoteness.

(384) Now if you've grasped this, know that if God—He is blessed and sublime—orders the winds to carry some of this water, it congeals after being carried because of the cold in it. The winds persist in carrying it bit by bit and they gradually wear it down. If the distance between us and the water is great, it undergoes dissolution in the extreme until it becomes like powder. Its particles gather together because of the humidity that's in it and so it sometimes comes down in the form of fine wool and other times in another form even more fine. This is the origin of snow. The case with hail is different. The distance between its congealing and its coming down isn't long because it's from the waters of seas in the middle of the earth and from pools that for the most part have formed in the earth after rain has fallen. That's why at times some of the hail in the middle of the pellet consists of particles of earth like chick peas and other such things. Reliable witnesses have observed this. And it's round (385) in the form of twisted, thick food and is made even thicker because of the wind buffeting it. Its particles circulate in the air under the power (the hands) of the wind like the circulating of particles of food in a bowl under the hands of a woman. Lumps occur in it the way they occur in the food. When it comes down suddenly, we observe this in it. If it were late to come down and the buffeting and circulating were to continue, its particles would break down and it would turn into snow. This is the explanation of the origin of snow and the place from which it comes down.

As for your asking: "Why is it peculiar to cold regions..." up to: "compared with how long it stays in the mountains", here's the answer. The cause of this is that snow remains congealed until an obstacle to this occurs. If the obstacle does occur, it turns back into rain. The obstacle in question is the vaporous particles arising from the earth which contain a kind of warmth. If they encounter snow, they curb its cold and its congealed state disappears. Moreover, it's clear that these vaporous particles are very numerous in warm regions and in the plains. Thus one doesn't see snow in those places. Even if snow is seen there, it doesn't remain very long, by contrast with cold regions and high mountains where there's no obstacle to the persistence of snow's congealed state.

As for your words: "And we see that sometimes it comes down with rain and other times it comes down alone", know that the cause of its coming down with rain is two things. Either some of its particles melt because of the above-mentioned vaporous particles and what didn't melt comes down as snow and what did melt comes down as rain. That's why the rain that comes down with it is mostly

weak, fine and delicate like snow. Or if it comes down before it's completely congealed, the winds carry the water and it congeals, and they wear it down and then they carry some other water. If God then orders that they both come down, the first descends as snow and the second as rain.

As for your words: "And the separation may be..." up to your words: "Is there a cause for this or not?", here's the answer. The difference depends on whether the obstacle to congealing exists or not. In cold regions the obstacle is missing, whereas in warm regions it's on hand. This is why each region has the peculiarities it has.

(386) As for your question: "Why is cold peculiar to the mountains and to elevated parts of the earth but not to the plains?", the answer is that this is peculiar to the mountains because of their proximity to the air which is in the most extreme cold, whereas the plains are remote from that air. This is what accounts for the difference.

And as for your words: "Then lightning only comes down..." up to where you say: "What's the secret in this?", the answer is that it isn't correct that lightning doesn't come down in land which is low-lying, flat and warm. Indeed, we've observed it come down in our region Sijilmāsa, which is a low-lying, flat and warm Sahara region. We've observed it come down there innumerable times.'

The Sayyid in the *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*<sup>98</sup> mentions that a boy was in the Sahara and a thunderbolt struck his feet and his legs collapsed but he didn't bleed.

And Qur'ānic commentators mention its coming down in the Sahara in connection with God the Sublime's words: 'He sends thunderbolts and strikes whomever He wishes with them' (13/13).

Now know that what we've said in this answer is what's reported by someone who sees the matter the way it really is since he's one of the possessors of deeper vision (*baṣīra*)—God give us profit through them—and we mean the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! And this answer must be attributed to our lords, the Sufis—God be pleased with them!

As far as what the people of the Sunna and the Community have to say, we've found nothing on this subject. Indeed, I consulted the most likely places concerning this matter in the books of Qur'ānic commentary, *ḥadīth* studies and speculative theology (*kalām*) but I haven't found anything about it. The *ḥāfiẓ* Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī—God have mercy on him—despite the splendor of his rank and the loftiness of his station with regard to the study of *ḥadīths* and

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98 See fn. 2 above.



traditions, doesn't treat the subject. It isn't to be found in the book he entitled *al-Hiba al-saniyya fī'l-hay'a al-sunniyya*<sup>99</sup> which he composed on cosmology (*'ilm al-hay'a*) and which handles such questions. Nor is it found in his *al-Hāshiya 'alā'l-Bayḍāwī*<sup>100</sup> where it's his practice to refute the words of the philosophers (*al-ḥukamā'*) that al-Bayḍāwī follows, by means of what the venerable forefathers (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*) have said. And it isn't found in *al-Durr al-manthūr fī tafsīr al-Qur'ān bi'l-ma'thūr*,<sup>101</sup> nor in any other of his books which we're familiar with. Yet he has much to say in these three books about thunder, thunderbolts, rain, clouds and lightning. It would have been right for him to speak about snow and hail, and their causes, because al-Bayḍāwī reports the method of the philosophers regarding these causes, which is based on denying there's an Agent with free will, (387) as the author of *al-Mawāqif* indicates, and this is the method of the philosophers. He says in *al-Mawāqif* and its *Sharḥ*:

'Know that the heat from the sun and other things makes particles rise into the air, either air and water particles mixed together, and this is vapor whose ascent is heavy, or fiery and earthen particles, and this is smoke whose ascent is light. Smoke isn't confined, as is well known with regard to the black matter which rises from what's burned by fire. Seldom do vapor and smoke rise in pure form but in most cases they gradually ascend in mixed form. And all the translunar effects (*āthār*) are formed from these two. As for vapor, if it's little and the heat in the air is strong, the heat dissolves the water particles and transforms them into air particles, and this is pure air. Otherwise—that is to say, if the situation isn't like this—if the vapor is abundant and the air doesn't contain enough heat to dissolve it, and if in its ascent this vapor reaches the essence (*ṭabī'a*) of bitter frost which, as you know, is the cold air, the air will cause it to congeal and it will thicken and become cloud. Its air particles will be turned into drops, either without solidification and this is rain—when the cold isn't intense—or with solidification—when the cold is intense. Then if solidification takes place before combining and forming drops and its becoming large bodies, this is snow. If solidification occurs after this, then it's hail. In this case it's round

<sup>99</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 141, LXXVIII; along with other subjects Chapter VIII of the *Hiba* deals with thunder (*ra'd*). Cf. Heinen, *Islamic Cosmology*, Arabic text, pp. 30-32; the title Heinen has chosen for al-Suyūṭī's work, i.e. *al-Hay'a al-saniyya fī'l-hay'a al-sunniyya*, is incorrect as well as rather unlikely.

<sup>100</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 141, LXXIX.

<sup>101</sup> *Durr manthūr* IV, pp. 620-28, on surah XIII (*al-Ra'd*).

and becomes like a ball with swift motion that penetrates the air it encounters, and the corners are effaced from the side of the descending drops.<sup>102</sup>

Then he discusses the cause of shadows, frost, fog, thunder, lightning, thunderbolts and the wind, as well as other such meteorological matters. And he says, after lengthy words summarized in a general, adequate form, what we've reported—in the second section or the first *marṣad*—all of which are the views of the philosophers who deny the existence of an omnipotent Being capable of exercising free will, as has been previously indicated time and again throughout the discussion, and so on and so forth up to the end. This is the gist of what he means.

And so Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī understands<sup>103</sup> the explanation of God the Sublime's words: 'And He sends down from the heavens mountains in which is hail' (24/43), by the method of the philosophers. What's astonishing is the silence of the ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī—God have mercy on him—in the *Ḥāshiya* which deals with this. And the same may be said of the Shaykh of Islam Zakariyyā<sup>3</sup> al-Anṣārī—God have mercy on him—in his *Ḥāshiya* on it.<sup>104</sup>

Know that with regard to the first answer, the one we heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—a whole notebook wouldn't be large enough for us if we wished to expatiate on it fully and explain its different aspects and go into it as the discussion requires. Sufficiency is contained in the present amount. But God the Sublime knows best!

(388) This is what al-Dabbāgh said, and Aḥmad b. Mubārak b. Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Sijilmāsī al-Lamaṭī, the humble servant of his Lord, has written it down. God show him kindness—amen!

[20]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about an earthquake and its cause. Indeed, I was with him—God be pleased with him—walking about in the Market of the Raṣīf<sup>105</sup> when a small earthquake occurred which some people noticed and others didn't. I was one of those who didn't notice it. When we reached al-Makhfiyya, people met us and they asked us whether we'd noticed the earthquake or not. I replied: 'We haven't noticed anything. There hasn't been an earthquake.'

102 Al-Ījī, *al-Mawāqif*, p. 242.

103 *Anwār al-tanzīl* I, p. 127.

104 'Ibriziana', p. 141, LXXX.

105 Cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index, s.v. Rāṣif.

The Shaykh then said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, there was one. It occurred when we were in the Market of the Raṣīf standing with So-and-so in his shop. That was when it spread out among the people.’

I asked him—God be pleased with him—about its cause, and I was familiar with what the venerable forefathers have said about it, as well as what the philosophers say. I wanted to hear his answer—God be pleased with him!

He said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘What causes earthquakes is God the Sublime manifesting Himself to the earth. The explanation of this matter is a secret.’ And I came to hear it from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Now at first, after the creation of the earth and before the creation of the mountains on it, this manifestation of God was frequent. And the earth shook and tilted. Then He screened off the earth—He is mighty and glorious—and created the mountains on it and the earth became settled. At the end of time this divine manifestation will again become frequent. Earthquakes and tremors will continue to be abundant until everyone on earth has perished.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī—God have mercy on him—in his book he entitled *Kashf al-ṣalṣala ‘an waṣf al-zalzala*<sup>106</sup> reports from Ibn ‘Abbās words close to what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him! The text of al-Suyūṭī is as follows:

‘Al-Ṭabarānī says in the *Kitāb al-Sunna*, in the chapter dealing with what’s come down about God the Sublime’s self-manifestation to the earth when earthquakes occur: “Ḥafṣ b. ‘Umar al-Raqqī<sup>107</sup> informed me—from ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmān al-Kalbī<sup>108</sup>—from Mūsā b. A‘yan<sup>109</sup>—from al-Awzā‘ī—from Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr<sup>110</sup>—from ‘Ikrima—from Ibn ‘Abbās who said: (389) ‘If God wishes to frighten His bondsmen, He reveals some of Himself to the earth and at that the earth shakes, and if God wishes to destroy a people, He manifests Himself to them.’”<sup>111</sup>

<sup>106</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 141, LXXXI.

<sup>107</sup> *Siyar* XIII, p. 405, no. 195; died 280/893.

<sup>108</sup> Is this ‘Amr b. ‘Uthmān al-Ḥimṣī? Cf. *Siyar* XII, pp. 305 f., no. 115; died 251/865.

<sup>109</sup> *Siyar* VIII, p. 280, no. 72; died 177/793.

<sup>110</sup> *Siyar* VI, p. 27, no. 9; died 119/737.

<sup>111</sup> *Kashf al-ṣalṣala*, p. 134, ll. 3 ff.

Al-Daylamī says in the *Musnad al-firdaws*:<sup>112</sup> “‘Abdūs<sup>113</sup> informed me—from Zanjūya<sup>114</sup>—from al-Qaṭī‘ī<sup>115</sup>—from the judge Muḥammad b. Ishāq al-Balkhī<sup>116</sup>—from Abū Nu‘aym<sup>117</sup>—from ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Barā’<sup>118</sup> of the people of Herat—from Abū ‘Abd Allāh al-Harawī<sup>119</sup>—from Muḥammad b. Azhar<sup>120</sup>—from Ayyūb b. Mūsā<sup>121</sup>—from Awzā‘ī—<sup>122</sup>from Yaḥyā b. Abī Kathīr—from ‘Ikrima—from Ibn ‘Abbās who said: ‘The Apostle of God said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “And if God wishes to frighten His creatures, He shows some of Himself to the earth and the earth trembles, and if God wishes to destroy His creatures, He appears to them.”’”<sup>122</sup>

God be pleased with the Shaykh—how knowledgeable he is in these matters!

Then the ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī says: ‘These reports make known the incorrectness of what the philosophers say, namely that earthquakes occur because of the abundance of vapors arising from the influence of the sun and their being gathered, i.e. the vapors, underneath the earth without the cold hindering them so they become water and without their being dissolved by the nethermost heat because of their great quantity. The surface of the earth is so hard that the vapors can’t penetrate it. Thus when they ascend and don’t find a way through, the earth shakes because of them and trembles the way the body of someone with a fever trembles because (390) of the vapors of heat that are stirred up in his interior. Sometimes the surface of the earth splits open and these confined substances come forth. Now the reason this is incorrect is because it’s a doctrine for which no proof is found. Indeed, there’s proof for the contrary.’<sup>123</sup> These are the words of the ḥāfiẓ—God the Sublime have mercy on him!

112 See GAL I, pp. 344 f.; died 509/1115.

113 Cf. editor’s fn., I, p. 389; *Siyar* XIV, p. 438, no. 245; died 312/924.

114 *Siyar* XIV, p. 522, no. 295; died 318/930.

115 Cf. editor’s fn., I, p. 389; *Siyar* XVI, p. 210, no. 143; died 268/881.

116 Editor’s fn., I, p. 389 is incorrect; probably died 230/844; *Siyar* XI, p. 449, no. 104.

117 See here fn 147 below.

118 Unidentified.

119 Unidentified.

120 Unidentified.

121 *Siyar* VI, p. 135, no. 45; died 133/750-51.

122 Quoted from the *Kashf al-ṣalṣala*, p. 135, ll. 8-13.

123 Continuation of the previous quotation.

And yes, I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—about the cause of the land's collapsing which sometimes appears in the earth and will be frequent at the end of time.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Now the earth is carried on water, the water is carried on wind, and the wind comes forth from an immense area located between the heavens and the direction of the water, I mean the water of the encompassing ocean. If we suppose a man would walk and not stop walking until he came to the end of the earth, he'd then see the encompassing ocean. And if we imagine that he walked on it and didn't stop walking, indeed didn't stop walking on top of the water until it came to an end, at that point all that would remain between him and the heavens would be the air from which the wind comes forth and he'd see winds beyond description and that can't be supported. These winds—with God's permission—carry the water and the earth, and hold fast the heavens. Moreover, they forever render service without resting an instant, and they ascend toward the heavens. Now if God the Sublime wishes that rain comes down on a people, he gives a command to some of these winds and they divert themselves toward the earth. They traverse the surface of the encompassing ocean or other parts and carry whatever water God the Sublime wishes to the place He wishes—He is mighty and glorious! And how often I look in the direction of the water near the air in which the winds are found! In the air I see mountains of snow so immense that only God knows their size—He is mighty and glorious! But when I return the next day, I find that these mountains have been transported to the water near Mt Qāf.<sup>124</sup> On such an occasion it's the diverted winds that have carried them there. But God the Sublime knows best!

And if God wishes that the land swallow up people, the winds enter into breathing holes and hollowed spaces in the earth, between the earth and the water. Then if the wind enters them, a dissolution occurs in the earth which causes the land (391) to collapse. At the end of time the breathing holes in the earth will be numerous and the diverting of the winds to the earth's direction will be frequent. Collapses of land will be frequent until the order of the earth becomes disturbed. All of this is God the Sublime's work and His will. But God the Sublime knows best!

The winds will then continue heading for the earth with the intention of destroying it, until the earth, under the influence of the winds, becomes like a sieve in the hands of someone who separates

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<sup>124</sup> A mythical mountain that encircles the earth. See EI, s.v. Kāf.

out a seed from soil and stones. What's made in the earth is the coccyx<sup>125</sup> from which the body is formed. This is like a small seed for Adam's offspring.<sup>126</sup> And God gathers it from the depths of the earth, the bottom of the ocean and from inside caves, from under mountains, and anywhere it may be. On that day the mountains are set in motion and they're carried away and scattered by the power of the wind. Then the heavens split open and water comes down on the coccyx. It goes on growing little by little like the growth of a honeydew melon (*filnīs*), a watermelon and similar things. And it appears on the face of the earth.'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'Here Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī used to say—God have mercy on him: "Bear in mind the day when the earth will become white and will proceed to growing the coccyx. When it's fully grown, it will bring forth the offspring of Adam the way an egg brings forth a bird." And he said: "On that day the navel will be found on the back, not on the belly. Then God the Sublime will order the spirits to enter into their bodily shapes. When the spirits have entered them, they'll rise to their feet independently and the umbilical cord will be cut. Once the spirits have completed entering their bodily shapes, God the Sublime will order the light and the secret which had kept Hell from going forth to the people of the world to move toward Paradise, and this is the light of our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Thereupon Hell will come forth to the people of the earth and approach them from every direction. On that day only God—He is blessed and exalted—knows the extent of fear that will come over the bondsmen."

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'On that day—the time when the spirits enter into bodily shapes—a roar and palpitation and voices will be heard on the part of the spirits that will fill hearts with terror, and livers will be lacerated in astonishment at this.'

And then he spoke about what will happen on that day—God be pleased with him—and some of it will be presented [later in this book]—if God is willing! But God the Sublime knows best!

[21]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—with regard to God the Sublime's words (392) addressed to mankind and the Jinn: 'Against you shall be dispatched flame of fire and molten brass, and you shall not be given help' (55/35)—whether this dispatching will

<sup>125</sup> coccyx: °*ajb al-dhanab*; the whole paragraph is puzzling.

<sup>126</sup> From the words: '...like a sieve in the hands...'; text and sense uncertain.

take place during the final gathering or after they've become settled in Hell.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This takes place during the final gathering and this is Hell-fire which comes forth against the people of the final gathering and surrounds them from all sides. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[22]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'On the day when We shall roll up the heavens the way a scroll (*al-sijill*) is rolled up for the writings (*li'l-kutub*)' (21/104). [I asked:] 'What's the meaning of *al-sijill*? There are commentators who interpret it as a page (*al-sahīfa*), i.e. the way a page is rolled up for the writings—i.e. because of the writing it contains, that is to say the page is rolled up because of the writing it contains.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The meaning of *al-sijill* is the implement upon which a copyist places the book he's copying from. The common people call it "the donkey for books".' And I think he said—God be pleased with him: 'This is a Syriac word. So the meaning is: "The day We roll up the heavens the way the said implement is rolled up." When the person using it is finished copying from it, he folds it up. And God the Sublime's words: "*li'l-kitāb*"<sup>127</sup> is used in a *ḥāl* relationship with *al-sijill*, i.e. the circumstances (*ḥāl*) are that the *sijill* in question is for a book, to the exclusion of a *sijill* that isn't for a book.' But I omitted to ask him—God be pleased with him—about the basis of the similarity and the circumstances of rolling up the heavens and why their being rolled up resembles this specific implement's being rolled up, or whether there's a special relationship between the two of them not found between any other things, or whether there's another kind of *sijill* not for a book so as to exclude it—and what that kind is. Had I asked him about these questions—God be pleased with him and have mercy on him—supernatural forms of knowledge would have come forth in the answers. Indeed, his answers to us are based only on what he sees directly—God be pleased with him! Since I lack words from him to complete the answer to the question, I'll conclude it with the words of the religious scholars—God be pleased with them!

(393) The imam Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Bukhārī says in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: '*Al-sijill* is a page.'<sup>128</sup> The *ḥāfiẓ* [Ibn Ḥajar] says in the *Fath* [*al-bārī*]:

<sup>127</sup> This is the singular of *kutub* in the Qurʾānic quotation and now *li-* means: '...is for a book'.

<sup>128</sup> Not found in *Concordance*.

‘Al-Firyābī<sup>129</sup> traces it back with his own chain of transmission, i.e. back to Mujāhid, and al-Farrā’ confirms it. Al-Ṭabarī<sup>130</sup> reports its meaning from ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭalḥa—from Ibn ‘Abbās who said about His words “the way a *sijill* is rolled up”: “the way a page is rolled up with writing”. Al-Ṭabarī says: “This means the way a *sijill* is rolled up with the writing it contains.” And it’s said that “with” means “because of”, i.e. because of the writing, since the page is rolled up because of the writing it contains.

And it’s transmitted from Ibn ‘Abbās: “Al-Sijill is the name of a scribe of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!” It was published in this wording by Abū Dāwūd, al-Nasā’ī and al-Ṭabarī from ‘Umar b. Mālik<sup>131</sup>—from Abū’l-Jawzā’<sup>132</sup>—from Ibn ‘Abbās. And a testimony for it is the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Umar found in Ibn Mardūya.<sup>133</sup> In the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Abbās found in Ibn Mardūya it says: “*Al-sijill* means a man in the language of the Abyssinians.” In Ibn Mundhir<sup>134</sup> by way of Muslim it says: “*Al-sijill* means an angel.”<sup>135</sup> And in al-Ṭabarī one finds the same with a different chain of transmission from (394) Ibn ‘Abbās. In ‘Ubayd b. Ḥamīd<sup>136</sup> one finds the same transmitted from ‘Aṭīyya,<sup>137</sup> and the same with a weak chain of transmission from ‘Alī.

Al-Suhaylī<sup>138</sup> says, transmitting from al-Naqqāsh:<sup>139</sup> “It’s an angel in the second celestial sphere to whom the guardian angels carry aloft men’s deeds every Thursday and Monday.” In al-Ṭabarī some of this meaning is found in the *ḥadīth* of Ibn ‘Umar. On the other hand, al-Tha’labī<sup>140</sup> and al-Suhaylī reject that *al-sijill* is the name of a scribe because it isn’t known among the scribes of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and none of his Companions were named al-Sijill. Al-Suhaylī says: “It’s only found

<sup>129</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 393; *Siyar* X, p. 114, no. 11; died 212/827.

<sup>130</sup> *Jāmi’* XVII, pp. 78 f.

<sup>131</sup> Mentioned in TT VII, p. 494, no. 818; but it should actually be ‘Amr b. Mālik al-Nukrī; TT VIII, p. 96, no. 154; died 129/746.

<sup>132</sup> *Siyar* IV, p. 371, no. 150; killed on the *yawm al-jamājim*. Regarding this battle cf. EI, s.v. Dayr al-Djamādjim; it took place in the year 83/702.

<sup>133</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 393; *Siyar* XVII, p. 308, no. 188; died 410/1019.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 393; GAS I, p. 495; died 319/931.

<sup>135</sup> Al-Suyūfī, *Ḥabā’ik*, p. 62.

<sup>136</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>137</sup> GAS I, pp. 30 f., no. 6; died 111/729.

<sup>138</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 394; *A’lām* III, p. 313; died 571/1185.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 394; *A’lām* VI, p. 275; died 414/1023.

<sup>140</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 394; *A’lām* III, p. 331; died 875/1470; or is the Qur’ānic commentator al-Tha’labī meant? On him see p. 296, ftn. 130.



in this report, and this limitation entails rejection.” But Ibn Manda<sup>141</sup> and Abū Nu‘aym<sup>142</sup> do mention him among the Companions. And Abū Nu‘aym transmitted it from Ibn Numayr<sup>143</sup>—from ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar<sup>144</sup>—from Nāfi‘—from Ibn ‘Umar who said: (395) “There was a scribe of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who was named al-Sijill.” And Ibn Mardūya published it in this form.<sup>145</sup> The above is what the *ḥāfiẓ* [Ibn Ḥajar] says—God have mercy on him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[23]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘He [Moses] said: “Oh my Lord, show me so I may behold You!” He [God] replied: “You will not see Me. But behold the mountain. If it remains fixed in its place, then you’ll see Me”’ (7/143). And I said: ‘Moses—peace be upon him—is one of the greatest knowers of God—He is exalted—and the knower of God is only a knower once he’s plunged into the oceans of vision (*mushāhada*). So how is it he asked for sight (*ru‘ya*) when he was one of the people of permanent vision. And is sight (*ru‘ya*) greater than vision (*mushāhada*)?’

He replied—God be pleased with him and give us benefit through his noble person: ‘For those who possess it vision of the Lofty Essence (*al-dhāt al-‘aliyya*) isn’t pure and devoid of vision of that essence’s actions unless the actions of the Lofty Essence cease. But were they to cease even for the blinking of an eye, existence would collapse and the order of the world would break down. There’s no existing thing which doesn’t contain the action of God the Sublime. That action is its substance and the cause of its continuation. Likewise, it’s the veil between it and the Lofty Essence. Were God the Sublime not to veil His actions in bodies, the bodies would be burned up and every contingent thing in the world would dissolve. Since vision for those who possess it isn’t pure and the aforementioned actions are like a speck of dust in the eye, Moses—blessings and peace be upon him—asked his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—to remove this action from him so it wouldn’t veil him from beholding the Lofty Essence in purity. His Lord—He is mighty and glorious—replied to him: “If I remove the action from a contingent thing, its body will break down. This mountain has a

<sup>141</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 394; GAS I, p. 214; died 395/1005.

<sup>142</sup> Not Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī; unidentified.

<sup>143</sup> Probably *Siyar* XI, p. 455, no. 111; died 234/848.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., I, p. 394; *Siyar* VI, p. 304, no. 129; died 147/764.

<sup>145</sup> *Faṭḥ* IX, p. 366.

stronger body than you and its mass is more solid. Look at it, and *if it remains fixed in its place* after My action is removed from it, *then you'll see Me.*" But when his Lord revealed Himself to the mountain and removed from it the action which veiled it from the power of the Lofty Essence, the mountain was levelled [to the ground] and its parts flew in all directions so that Moses lost consciousness—peace be upon him!

Al-Dabbāgh then recounted divine secrets—God be pleased with him! May God not deprive us of them—through His grace and His generosity! But God the Sublime knows best!

[24]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: (396) 'God eradicates and He establishes whatever He wishes' (13/39). The scholars of Qur'ānic commentary—God be pleased with them—greatly disagree about this. And I related some of what they say.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'I'll only explain the verse in accordance with what I heard from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who mentioned it to me with its explanation the other day.' And then he said—God be pleased with him: 'What occurs in the way of bondsmen's random thoughts that concern existing things are of two kinds. One kind doesn't happen. This is referred to by His words: "God eradicates whatever He wishes." And there's a kind which does happen. This is referred to by His words: "...and He establishes". In other words, when it comes to random thoughts concerning future matters like rainfall, someone's arrival and the occurrence of an event, some of these thoughts don't happen and they're "eradicated", whereas others do take place and they're "established". "And with Him"—He is exalted—"is the mother of the book" (13/39) and it's eternal knowledge which never fails to happen. That's how the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—explained it. So trust in this and discard whatever you've heard apart from it.' That is to say, I'd [now] heard from him a different explanation of the verse, and how often his explanation revealed higher realities of divine knowledge! But God the Sublime knows best!

[25]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And when the angels said: "Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you above all women. Oh Mary, be submissive to your Lord. Prostrate yourself and bow to Him with those who bow down"' (3/43).

I asked: 'Does this verse prove that Lady Mary was a prophetess? Or is it true what's been said about other women being prophetesses—women such as the mother of Moses, Āsiya the wife of Pharaoh, Sarah, Hagar and Eve [i.e. that they're not prophetesses]? There are religious scholars who hold the first view, and others among them who hold the second. Someone from the second group reports that there's consensus about Lady Mary not being a prophetess and that this is even more explicit in the case of other women. And there are those like the shaykh al-Ash'arī<sup>146</sup>—(397) the chief of the people of the Sunna and the Community—who withheld judgement. The first group present as proof that an angel only comes down to a prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—and the verse is clear about the angel's coming down to Mary. They establish this as the difference between the prophet and the Friend of God. They say: "An angel comes down to the prophet, whereas the Friend receives inspiration and an angel doesn't come down to him."

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Those who hold the second view are right, that is to say prophecy is denied to the female sex. God has never granted prophecy to this sex. Rather Mary was a *ṣiddīqa*. Prophethood and Friendship with God have in common that each of them is a light and a secret from the secrets of God—He is mighty and glorious! But the light of prophethood is separate from the light of Friendship. What this difference consists of can only be truly grasped through unveiling (*kashf*). However, the light of prophethood is original, essential and real, and created with the body at the inception of its formation. That's why the prophet is protected from sin in all his circumstances. But the light of Friendship is contrary to this. If someone who's experienced illumination looks at a person who's going to be a Friend of God, he sees a body like any other body. But if he looks at the body of a person who's going to be a prophet, he sees the light of prophethood in his body beforehand and he sees that the nature of such bodies has been imbued with the previously mentioned parts of prophethood that were referred to in the *ḥadīth*: "This Qur'ān has been sent down upon seven letters."

The nature of a person endowed with these parts is formed to tell the truth even if it's bitter, to possess patience which keeps him from perceiving pain and experiencing discomfort, to feel perfect mercy, to have knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—in the way knowledge of Him should be, to have complete fear of Him—He is

<sup>146</sup> Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935): founder of the conservative 'school' of theology that bears his name. See fn. 110 in Chapter Seven; and cf. EI s.n.

mighty and glorious—a fear in which interior fear mingles with external fear so that fear is continuous in all his circumstances, to loathe the false with continual loathing, to have perfect forgiveness so that he's helpful to someone who's hindered him and benefits someone who's harmed him. These then are the characteristics of prophethood and its seven parts which put their stamp on the body of the prophet before and after illumination. As for the body of the Friend of God, it's like any other body before illumination and nothing additional is contained in it. When it experiences illumination, the lights arrive in it and its lights are contingent. That's why the Friend of God isn't protected from sin before or after illumination.

As for what was mentioned about the difference between the prophet and the Friend regarding an angel coming down or not, that isn't (398) true because someone who's experienced illumination, whether he's a Friend or a prophet, necessarily beholds angels in their bodies the way they really are and he speaks to them and they speak to him. Indeed, if someone says the Friend of God doesn't behold an angel and doesn't speak to him, this is proof that he hasn't experienced illumination.<sup>147</sup>

I, al-Lamaʿi, would add that this is what [Ibn al-ʿArabī] al-Ḥātimī says—God have mercy on him—in the 364th *bāb* of *al-Futūḥāt al-makkiyya*: 'Regarding the difference between the prophet and the Friend of God, a group of our colleagues, among them the imam Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī, are mistaken in their view that an angel comes down to a prophet, whereas the Friend receives inspiration without an angel coming down to him.'<sup>148</sup>

And he says: 'The correct view is that the difference consists in what the angel brings down with him. When an angel comes down to a Friend, he orders him to follow and obey, and he may inform him about the authenticity of a *ḥadīth* which the religious scholars have declared "weak". Moreover, he may come down with glad tidings from God and tell him he's among the people of felicity and security, as God the Sublime has said: "For them is glad tidings in the present life and in the hereafter" (10/64).'

He goes on to say: 'And the cause of their mistake is that they imagine that they include all the paths of God in their behavior. Thus when no angel comes down to them, they imagine an angel won't

<sup>147</sup> From the Qurʾānic words at the beginning of the section: 'And when the angels said...' cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 145, l. -2 to p. 146, l. -5.

<sup>148</sup> Cf. 'Ibriziana', p. 141, LXXXII; *Futūḥāt* III, p. 316, ll. 11 f.; and cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 168, ll. -4 f. The passage hasn't been found in al-Ghazzālī.

come down to anyone else and that an angel never comes down to a Friend. If they were to hear from a trustworthy person of an angel's coming down to a Friend, they'd change their view because they believe in the thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends of God. And indeed a group did come over to my view after they'd believed the contrary.' This is a summary of his words.

Now if you've grasped the Shaykh's words—God be pleased with him—about the above-mentioned difference, then you're aware that what al-Ḥātimī approves concerning the difference—God have mercy on him—isn't clear because the gist of it is that an angel doesn't come down to the Friend of God with commands and prohibitions, as he does in the case of the prophet. However, this isn't right. An angel does come down to the Friend with commands and prohibitions, but this doesn't necessarily mean he brings a *sharī'a*. There's no *sharī'a* in the story of Mary. Indeed, the angel comes down to her with a command, though she was no prophetess—as previously stated.

If we were to divulge what we heard on this subject from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—it would be a miracle for those who seek and a mainstay for people with longing. But this is a secret which mustn't be divulged. None the less, I'd like to mention here two things from the Shaykh's forms of knowledge—God be pleased with him! **One of them** is some of what's beheld by a person who receives illumination:

He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for in the first station, certain things are disclosed to him, among them: (399) 1) acts of God's bondsmen when they're in seclusion, and 2) beholding (*mushāhada*) the seven earths and the seven heavens, and 3) beholding the fire which is found in the fifth earth, as well as other things in the earth and the sky.'

And he said: 'This fire is the fire of Barzakh because Barzakh extends from the seventh heaven to the seventh earth, and the spirits after they leave their physical shapes are located in it in accordance with their ranks. The spirits of the people of wretchedness—God protect us from that—are in this fire which has the form of confined dwellings like wells, caves and nests. Its inhabitants are forever engaged in rising and descending. One of them scarcely speaks a single word to you before his abyss causes him to sink downward.' And he said: 'This fire isn't Hell, because Hell is located outside the globe of the seven heavens and the seven earths. And such is the case with Paradise as well.'

[He continued:] ‘And among the things he beholds is 4) the interconnection of the earths with one another, how you emerge from one earth to the other, what distinguishes one earth from the other, and the created beings found in each earth, and 5) beholding (*mushāhada*) the interconnection of the celestial spheres with one another, their relation to the heavens and how the stars are arranged in them, and 6) beholding the satans and how they propagate, and 7) beholding the Jinn and where they dwell, and 8) beholding the course of the sun, the moon and the stars, and the frightful sounds which are like thunderbolts that instantly kill. This is what he hears continuously, and he mustn’t consider any of these things to be important but take everything he sees to be insignificant. Otherwise, his state will come to a halt and his affair will suffer a reversal, because the body at the time of illumination is permeable and is permeated by everything it deems good.

Moreover, all these things which he beholds are darkness. If he relies on any of them, he’ll come to a halt in darkness and be cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious! That’s why someone who hasn’t received illumination is on safe ground, whereas the person with illumination is in extreme danger—unless God protects him. Now if the body was tempted and distracted from God—He is mighty and glorious—by things like almonds, raisins and chick peas, not to mention dirhems and dinars and women and children, how would he not be tempted after illumination by beholding the translunar and the sublunar world and by satans assisting him in whatever he wishes? There’s no protection save in God!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Whoever comes to a halt with any of these above-mentioned things, the satans accompany him hand in hand and he becomes one of the magicians and fortunetellers. We beseech God for protection from this! But whomever God the Sublime shows mercy, He draws him unto Himself and creates within him a longing and heart-felt desire with which he penetrates these veils.

As for what he beholds in the second station, the eternal lights are disclosed to him the way (400) the gloom-laden ephemeral things were disclosed in the first station. Thus in this station he beholds the angels and the recording angels, the Dīwān and the Friends of God who constitute it. And he beholds the station of Jesus—blessings and peace be upon him—and all who are attached to him and are like him, then the station of Moses—blessings and peace be upon him—and all who are with him, then the station of Idrīs—blessings and peace—and all who are with him, then the station of Joseph—

blessings and peace be upon him—and all who are with him, then the stations of three of the previous apostles, some of whom were before Idrīs and others who were after him—but their names aren't known among people.<sup>149</sup> If we were to describe the stations of the prophets just mentioned and what an angel looks like as he was originally created, the hearer would hear things his mind couldn't support.

It's also incumbent on a person to whom these things have been disclosed not to come to a halt with any of them for the reason given previously, i.e. at that time his body is permeable, and if he halts with any of them his body will be permeated by its secrets, so that if he halts at the station of our lord Jesus, for instance, and deems it good, he'll be given its secret to drink and he'll immediately renounce his religion and leave the Muslim community. We beseech God for protection against this!

One who's experienced illumination remains in immense danger and imminent destruction until he beholds the station of our lord and master Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! If he does behold him, he then obtains happiness and his joy is complete<sup>150</sup> because in the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is a power that draws one to God—He is mighty and glorious! His noble body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has been distinguished among all created beings by this power. That's why he's the most esteemed of created beings and the best of mankind. Then if the illuminated person arrives at the station of our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the attraction to God which he experiences—He is mighty and glorious—increases and he's safe from being cut off. This subject contains further secrets which those endowed with illumination are familiar with. God make us one of their number and don't deprive us of their blessing!

As for the third station, in it the beholder beholds the secrets of predestination in the aforementioned lights.

As for the fourth station, in it the beholder beholds the light in which action is spread thin and in which it dissolves like the dissolution of poison in water. Action is like poison and the light is like water. In this station many fall into error because they imagine this light to be God—but God is elevated above that light by so great an elevation!

<sup>149</sup> From: 'Thus in this station he...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 204, ll. 10-31.

<sup>150</sup> From: 'One who's experienced...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 204, ll. -7 f.

(401) And in the fifth station he beholds action's drawing apart from his light and he sees the light as a light and action as an action. The error concerning what he at first imagined becomes clear.'

We've refrained from mentioning the names of the stations and explaining their meanings and providing an exhaustive treatment of their divisions, because our purpose is to indicate a warning for the person who's received illumination. And that has occurred—praise be to God—with an explanation which entails secrets that are only to be communicated orally to those worthy of them.

Now **the second thing** is that you've come to understand the difference between a prophet and a Friend of God.

As for the difference between a prophet and an angel, it's that the body of an angel is made from light and God the Sublime has inserted reason and the senses.

I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'In the body of an angel there are five heads. Each head has a right and a left, as well as an above and a below. And above, it has nine mouths. The total of mouths in each head is sixty-three. Then you multiply the five heads by the number of the said mouths and the result is three hundred and fifteen mouths. Furthermore, the mouth contains three tongues or it may contain five tongues or it may even contain seven tongues. If it contains three, the result of multiplying them by the number of mouths is nine hundred and forty-five tongues. If it contains five, the result is one thousand five hundred and seventy-five tongues. And if it contains seven, the result is two thousand two hundred and five tongues. Now if an angel utters a word, his voice brings it forth with all these tongues. God the awesome Creator and Sovereign is exalted! If the person endowed with illumination hasn't been strengthened by God the Sublime with additional power from Himself, his heart will break upon hearing the voice of an angel. So what do you imagine it's like to behold an angel's body in its original appearance.

Having heard this, then hear that the body of an angel is pure light with reason and senses inserted in it. And he's like the spirit which was created from his light and that light contains reason. By means of it knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—occurs along with all that's been previously described about the spirit's seven parts. And it was previously stated that the spirit's forms of science are innate and associated with its original formation. And this is the case with an angel and he receives illumination at the very beginning of his affair.



(402) As for a prophet, his body is created from earth, and the spirit with its secrets is veiled in this earthen body. Moreover, earth by its nature requires veils. Only in the case of a prophet's body has the darkness disappeared, due to what God the Sublime provided it with by means of the light of prophethood in its original formation. The veil is diaphanous. The person endowed with it is like a companion of the truth continuously, a close intimate of God, a close intimate of the truth. His movement is only in truth, and his repose is only in truth. If he's silent, he's silent in the truth. If he speaks, he speaks the truth. His entire affair is the truth. Even if one were to suppose he was born among a people who were formed in error, he'd separate himself from them and contradict them in everything he did and omitted to do simply because of the truth which is contained within his body, without hearing divine law or commands and prohibitions. Now this is the situation of every prophet in his original formation, in the beginning of his affair and before he receives illumination. But if illumination occurs and the veil between the spirit and the body completely disappears and he enters the plane of permanent witnessing—then don't ask about the abundance of his oceans that have no shore! When this occurs, an angel can't support him, nor can any other created being. But God the Sublime knows best!

[26]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And Dhū'l-Nūn<sup>151</sup> when he went away in anger and he thought that We would have no power over him' (21/87). [I asked:] 'How could he think divine omnipotence wouldn't affect him and that he could escape his Lord's encompassing? Such behavior would be alien to the least of the weakest monotheists. So how could prophets and apostles behave like this?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The meaning of "in anger" refers to his being angry at them because they abandoned what contained their right guidance and well-being, i.e. belief in him and submission to his command. This was until God the Sublime's command and His punishment descended on them, as was clear for everyone to see. Then the punishment hung above their dwellings and when Jonah saw this—peace be upon him—he was angry and: "He ran away to the laden ship" (37/140). As for God the Sublime's words: "He thought that We would have no power over him", this means: "He thought that We wouldn't destroy him the way We

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<sup>151</sup> The prophet Jonah, known as 'The Possessor of the Whale'.

destroyed them.” That is to say, when he saw the signs of the punishment, he fled from them, thinking he could escape and that what struck them wouldn’t strike him. This is like a man who sees an approaching fire that makes no distinction between one person and another, or who sees a flash flood coming that no one standing in its way can escape. The man flees, thinking his flight will save him from the fire and from the flood. Such was Jonah’s situation—peace be upon him! (403) When he saw the punishment descending on his people and he thought that if he remained with them what struck them would strike him, he fled from them, thinking that because of his flight what struck them wouldn’t strike him. Then God the Sublime showed him another form of omnipotence which didn’t exist in his thought—peace be upon him! When he saw this: “He called out in the darkness: ‘There is no god but You! Glory be unto You! I was one of the wrongdoers’” (21/87).

God replied to him and saved him—He is mighty and glorious! And after this the story became a sign for those who recollect, an example for those who are sincerely penitent, consolation for the afflicted, and an opening of the gate of relief for those who implore. For indeed, God says: “We delivered him from grief and this is how We deliver the believers” (21/88).

Now his flight—peace be upon him—was because he thought he could escape the punishment that descended on his people. It wasn’t based on rendering ineffective divine omnipotence and escaping from his Lord’s encompassing reach.’

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this is the best that’s been said about the verse. Commentators on the verse have offered numerous explanations, whereas whoever thinks about it will realize that this is the most excellent explanation. But God the Sublime knows best!

[27]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘And Job when he called to his Lord: “Adversity has befallen me and You are the most merciful of the merciful!”’ (21/83). [I asked:] ‘What’s meant by the adversity that befell him? And is what the Qur’ānic commentators say about Job’s illness—peace be upon him—true or not? Likewise, is it true what they say about the length of time of his adversity?’ And I mentioned to him what the ḥāfiẓ Ibn Ḥajar says in the *Fatḥ [al-bārī]* in the chapter *Aḥādīth al-anbiyāʾ*.<sup>152</sup> Whoever wishes to be informed about this let him look in the entry (*tarjama*) on Job—peace be upon him!

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152 *Fatḥ* VII, pp. 76 ff.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The adversity which befell Job was that he turned his attention to something other than God the Sublime, and this is the greatest adversity for the knowers of God—He is mighty and glorious—among the prophets and the apostles. This was the adversity which Job—peace be upon him—asked his Lord to remove from him, not the adversity of his body’s illness. Indeed, the latter brought him closer to God—He is mighty and glorious! What distanced him from his Lord—He is sublime—was turning his attention to something other than Him and being cut off from Him, even if only for one instant.’

As for the illness which the Qur’ānic commentators and the historians refer to, it didn’t exist. The period of his illness (404) was two months and a few days. The Shaykh told me precisely—God be pleased with him—though I’ve forgotten it. But God the Sublime knows best!

[28]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘Whoever turns away from remembering Me, his livelihood shall be confined and on the Day of Resurrection We shall raise him blind’ (20/124). [I asked:] ‘What’s meant by a confined livelihood? If by this is meant a restricted livelihood—the matter becomes obscure because many of the unbelievers are wealthy people, and there’s no doubt that their livelihood is ample and not restricted. But the verse requires that anyone who turns away from Him—He is exalted—shall have a restricted livelihood.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Minds undergo in the [present] world what bodies will experience in the hereafter. And God—He is blessed and exalted—has decreed that the unbelievers will spend eternity in Hell. Moreover, the state of the unbeliever grows more troubled with the passing of every hour due to the misgivings that have previously entered his heart. Doubt arouses worry in him and makes his affair troubled for him. The very least it says to him is: “Perhaps you don’t belong to the true religion.” Now this is what God casts into the hearts of unbelievers and because of this their livelihood is restricted, even if they’re rich people and kings. The meaning of its restrictedness is restrictedness in hearts, not in what they possess. Indeed, if someone possesses ample worldly goods but knows that God’s wrath will be his final outcome, his livelihood is restricted.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that what the Shaykh said is of the utmost excellence. Moreover, al-Bayḍawī says with reference to explaining restrictedness of livelihood: ‘This is because everything that

concerns him and the objects of his longing are things of the world. He exhausts himself in multiplying them and fears their decrease, in contrast to the believer who strives for the hereafter.’<sup>153</sup> This is a summary of his words.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that one of the scholars of jurisprudence (*faqīh*)—and he’d been held in captivity by the infidels for seven years—informed me that all the while he was their captive he never ceased arguing with them, nor they with him. He said: ‘I went on for a long time examining them and testing them until it became clear to me that most of them were in doubt and because of the illness in their hearts they were like a man with mange who longs for someone who’ll scratch him. If they perceive someone who’s a student (*tālib*) of Islam, they rush to him to put questions to him and discuss with him. But all that’s gained is that they fall into his snare due to the slightest word he addresses to them.’ He said: ‘This is the case with the mediocre among them. As for their great men, their bishops and the (405) well informed among them, after having examined them at length and frequently argued with them, I realized that they were themselves convinced they were engaged in error and falsehood. “And God prevails in His purpose” (12/21).’ And he went on: ‘I didn’t cease arguing with them until they told me there was one of their learned authorities in such-and-such a place and knowledge of the previous [revealed] books rested with him. I then went to him and found that [in learning] he was indeed an ocean without a shore. He had at his disposition the texts of the Torah, the Gospels, the Psalms and the noble Qur’ān, and numerous *ḥadīths* of our Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—as well as some poems by Imra’ al-Qays al-Kindī.’<sup>154</sup>

I said to him: “I’ve come to ask you about a matter of the greatest importance to me. It causes me distress, keeps me awake at night, and prolongs my sadness.” He asked: “And what’s that?” I replied: “While I was in the lands of Islam, I never ceased to hear that the religion of Islam is true and that the religion of the Christians is wrong. But as soon as I found myself in your lands, the matter became reversed for me. I hear everyone say that his religion is true and the religion of Islam is false.”—I made it clear to him that I experienced doubt for this reason.—“When I asked who’s the most learned among the Christians, everyone agreed it’s you. No two people disagree that you’re their chief and the most learned among them. Now God has made it a duty for the ignorant to ask a person

<sup>153</sup> *Anwār al-tanzīl* II, p. 61.

<sup>154</sup> GAS II, pp. 122 ff.; thought to have died some time before 550 AD.

who knows. I'd like you to tell me what in your view is correct in this matter so that on the Day of Resurrection I can adopt your answer as proof regarding what's between me and my Lord—He is mighty and glorious! I'm an ignorant man while you're a man with knowledge, and God has made it a duty for the ignorant to ask and for the man with knowledge to tell the truth and give counsel about God."

The question made a great impression on him. He rested his forehead in his hand and was silent for a long time. And there were great numbers of Christians sitting with him. Then he raised his head and whispered in my ear: "There's no religion but the religion of Islam. It's the truth and God won't accept any other. Leave me now before the Christians become aware of what I've told you!"

Then he related the arguments he had with their learned authorities about this subject. But to report these falls outside our purpose. We only wished to confirm what the Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him! Whoever has argued with the Jews and the Christians understands what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him!

I myself spoke with one of the learned authorities (rabbi) of the Jews and I went on presenting him with arguments until it was clear to me in the end that he was convinced he was wrong and that what held him back from Islam was his stubbornness and the fear of disgrace in the eyes of his people. This was a long argument attended by a group of jurists and Qur'ānic reciters from among our colleagues, and the Jew was also accompanied by a number of other Jews.

(406) Likewise, I spoke with some Christian learned authorities and didn't find anything [valid] among them. There are many stories about this. Whoever is interested in it should read the [*Tuḥfat al-adīb fī'l-radd 'alā ahl al-ṣalīb*] written by 'Abd Allāh al-Mayyūrqī<sup>155</sup> who was one of their learned authorities and then became a Muslim. And there's the work by 'Abd al-Ḥaqq al-Islāmī<sup>156</sup> who was one of the learned authorities of the Jews, and likewise the work of Abū'l-'Abbās al-Qurtubī<sup>157</sup> in refutation of the Christians. It contains marvel upon marvel and consists of around twenty notebooks. Whoever reads these works and mingles with people of the two Books<sup>158</sup> will know with certainty that their hearts are sick with doubt and the conviction that they're wrong—God be pleased with

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155 Unidentified.

156 Unidentified.

157 Unidentified.

158 The Bible and the Gospels.

our lord the Shaykh and give us benefit through him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[29]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And he felt inclined toward her,<sup>159</sup> except he saw the sign of his Lord' (12/24). [I asked:] 'What was it he felt inclined to do?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'He felt inclined to slap her.' And I asked him about what some Qur'ānic commentators say concerning this. But he emphatically rejected their view. And he said: 'Where [in this] is protection from sin (*ʿiṣma*)? When the Friend of God receives illumination, God removes from him seventy-two veins of darkness. From the one vein arises lying, from another arises pride, from another arises hypocrisy and from another love of the world. From another still arises lust and a liking for fornication. And so it is for other such wicked things. This is the case with the Friend of God but how much more so when it comes to a prophet, since protection from sin is his natural disposition and his body was formed in accordance with it.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Friend of God may reach a state in which an object of lust and anything else are on the same level in his sight so that even a female's genitals and this stone'—and he pointed to a stone in front of him—'would be one and the same. And why not, since what's found in women's wombs, let alone anything else, isn't hidden from the person who's received illumination? Indeed, he sees this through the light of God which Satan has no access to and which can never be accompanied by darkness. If this is a rightful claim of the Friend of God, how much more so in the case of the prophet who's protected from sin. God see to it that we're among those who acknowledge prophethood's rightful claim! But God the Sublime knows best!'

[30]<sup>160</sup>

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And God spoke directly to Moses' (4/164). (407) [I asked:] 'Is this exclusive to Moses—peace be upon him—? And is it true what the Sufi masters say—God be pleased with them—about God speaking to them? Take for example what the shaykh and knower of God Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī says—God be pleased with

<sup>159</sup> Joseph 'felt inclined' toward Zulaykhā (Potiphar's wife).

<sup>160</sup> The editor mistakenly numbers this section as section [29]. From here until the end of Chapter Two all his section numbers are one number lower than ours.

him—in *al-Ḥizb al-kabīr*: “Bestow on us vision (*mushāhada*) accompanied by speech with God!”<sup>161</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘What the shaykh Abū’l-Ḥasan and other Sufis say about speaking with God is true without any doubt, and this doesn’t contradict the noble Qur’ānic verse because it contains no restriction.’

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘If God—He is mighty and glorious—has mercy on him, a person who’s been given illumination hears the word of God—He is sublime—by means of supernatural hearing. And he hears it without letters, sound and perceiving it with particular qualities. Nor does he hear it coming from one direction but he hears it from all directions, indeed from all the substances of his body. And just as his hearing isn’t from one direction, so it isn’t through one particular part of his body. That is to say, he hears it with all his substances and every part of his body. There’s no part of him, no substance, no tooth, no molar and no single hair that he doesn’t hear with. His whole body becomes like an ear that hears.’

Then he described how those who’ve received illumination differ with regard to the amount of their hearing and he gave an explanation of this which can’t be recounted—God give us benefit through him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[31]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘And when you’re journeying in the land, there’s no fault in you should you shorten the prayer, [if you fear the unbelievers will afflict you]’ (4/101). [I asked:] ‘But what’s the reason for the restriction based on a situation of fear, whereas shortening the prayer is allowed even in a situation of security?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The mentioned restriction isn’t intended for exclusion so that the meaning behind it (*al-mafhūm*)<sup>162</sup> is inconsistent but it’s to provide authoritative text in order to remove the fault from this situation in particular and to draw attention (408) to including it under this rule. This is because the Companions—God be pleased with them—were undertaking much worship when they went forth in holy war, fearing that this might be their final time in the world. They extended the worship endlessly so that some of them would fight during the day and pass the night for the sake of God the Sublime performing inclinations and prostrations. And they considered diminishing worship when on

<sup>161</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 142, LXXXIV; *Sharḥ Ḥizb al-barr*, p. 43, ll. -4 f.

<sup>162</sup> Cf. van Ess, *Īcī*, index, where *mafhūm* is translated as ‘Begriff’.

campaign against their enemy to be a failing and a grave fault contrary to preparing for the hereafter. In their view it was right to increase worship at that time and this was firmly established in their minds. So God the Sublime wished to remove this from their hearts and sent down the rule as applicable to the very situation they imagined was contradictory to the rule. But God the Sublime knows best!

[32]

And since our discussion had turned to implied meaning (*al-mafhūm*), I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the meaning implied in the Prophet’s words—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘Alms tax is owed for freely grazing sheep.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘[Excluded are] sick sheep that can’t graze. If sheep end up in this state, they’re not subject to *zakāt* (alms tax) because *zakāt* corresponds to wealth of property. But if sheep reach the point where they can’t eat and graze, they no longer constitute wealth of property which is subject to *zakāt* because in this case, for the most part, they die and perish. This then is what the Prophet meant—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

Then I said: ‘Al-Shāfi‘ī says: “The implied meaning is sheep nourished with fodder.”’

And he replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Sheep nourished with fodder are included in the wording of the *ḥadīth* because they’re free-grazing sheep by nature but they’ve been held back from grazing. If they were released to follow their nature, they wouldn’t give up grazing freely. Their owner is the one who’s responsible for giving them fodder, and wealth of property is confirmed in them.’

Then I asked him about the disagreement regarding implied meaning (*al-mafhūm*) among the independent scholars of jurisprudence (*al-mujtahidūn*). Some of them maintain it must absolutely be taken into account and others maintain it must (409) absolutely be done away with. And some differentiate in accordance with the principles of jurisprudence (*al-uṣūl*).

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The implied meaning can only possibly be known in truth by a man who’s familiar with the causes and the purposes which led the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—to add a restriction. And this isn’t possible without knowing the Prophet’s noble interior—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! If a man among us were to set down restrictions in his rulings and then disappear, it wouldn’t be possible for us to know with certainty what he meant by his restrictions without



knowing what he thought about them. This can only occur by asking him—if it happens that he's alive—so he may explain clearly what he meant. If he can't be questioned about what he meant because he's dead, it's impossible to know his meaning. Moreover, if someone maintains the implied meaning must absolutely be taken into account or that it must absolutely not be taken into account, he's travelling one and the same path with regard to restrictions, and this isn't right because the purposes leading to imposing restrictions vary. Some of them require infringement with regard to a ruling, while others require conformity. It's the same with those who give an explanation in accordance with the scholars of jurisprudence (Uṣūliyyūn). Whoever rejects the number absolutely and takes into account the condition absolutely, is travelling one path regarding the restriction of the number and travelling one path regarding the restriction of the condition.<sup>163</sup> And this is contrary to the purposes which led to the restriction on them.'

In sum, only the great men among those who've received illumination, men like our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—truly understand the legal restrictions. Indeed, with him I delved deeply into this subject after I'd studied and become familiar with what the eminent scholars of the principles of jurisprudence have said about implied meanings (*al-mafāhīm*), scholars such as Imām al-Ḥaramayn in the *Burhān*,<sup>164</sup> the imam Abū Ḥāmid [al-Ghazzālī] in the *Mustaṣfā*,<sup>165</sup> the imam Abū'l-Walīd al-Bājī in the *Fuṣūl*,<sup>166</sup> al-Abyārī<sup>167</sup> and the imam 'Alī b. Ismā'īl in the *Sharḥ al-Burhān*, the imam Abū (410) 'Abd Allāh b. al-Ḥājj al-'Abdarī in the *Sharḥ al-Mustaṣfā*,<sup>168</sup> and finally what Tāj al-Dīn al-Subkī says in the *Jam' al-Jawāmi'*<sup>169</sup> and in his commentaries and notes. And there were others besides these men.

I acquired all this through study and then I discussed the subject for days with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and I heard from him what surpasses the independent scholars of jurisprudence.

<sup>163</sup> From the words: 'Whoever rejects the number absolutely...' the sense is uncertain.

<sup>164</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 142, LXXXV; *Burhān* I, p. 448, § 353 ff.; al-Juwaynī died 478/1085.

<sup>165</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 142, LXXXVI; *Mustaṣfā* II, p. 70.

<sup>166</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 142, LXXXVII; not found in the *Fuṣūl*; al-Bājī died 474/1081.

<sup>167</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 142, LXXXVIII (al-Abyārī and imam 'Alī b. Ismā'īl are the same person).

<sup>168</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 142, LXXXIX; al-'Abdarī died 737/1336.

<sup>169</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 143, XC; al-Subkī died 771/1370.

But how would this not be the case since he's one of those who behold the Prophet continually—God's blessings and peace be upon him! God bestow on us the Shaykh's contentment and his love, and on the Final Day gather us among his number and in his party—amen!

[33]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words concerning Abraham—peace be upon him: 'And when night settled over him, he saw a star and said: "This is my Lord"' (6/76). [I asked:] 'Was this a deduction for his own sake on Abraham's part—peace be upon him—and a look at God's works—He is mighty and glorious—in order to ascend to the truth by means of it? Or was this a deduction for the sake of his people by way of reproach and to cause them to be silent? Indeed, he stated their claim by way of acquiescing, but then he turned and attacked it, declaring it false. On this question the Qur'ānic commentators disagree—God be pleased with them!'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This was a deduction he made for his own sake but it isn't like a deduction of all other people. Indeed, the deduction of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—isn't like the deduction of all other people. The prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—are endowed with the utmost knowledge of God the Sublime and possess perfection in being God's bondsman—He is mighty and glorious—and absolute fear and humility before Him—He is exalted! Knowledge of the truth and an inclination toward it are innate in their bodies. The meaning of Abraham's deduction—peace be upon him—in this Qur'ānic verse is that he wished to see with the eyes of his head what he was accustomed to see in his interior and with his deeper vision (*baṣīra*). He knew God the Sublime with complete knowledge through his deeper vision. He wanted his deeper vision to penetrate to his eyes. So he set about seeking with his eyes among these existing beings what corresponded to the Transcendent and the Sanctified—He is sublime—and he then turned away from them completely toward what he knew through his deeper vision, namely toward Him Who brought forth the heavens and the earth completely—He is sublime!

The similitude for this—by way of approximation—is the Friend of God who's received illumination. On the night of the 29th [of Ramaḍān] he looks for the new moon and with his deeper vision he sees that it's begun to appear. Then he looks at it with his eyes but he doesn't see it. (411) He begins to search for it with his eyes along

with the other people who are searching for it. Whoever looks at him and doesn't know what's in his interior, may suspect that he's in doubt as to whether the new month has begun, like everyone else searching for it among those present. But anyone who knows what's in his deeper sight is certain he's convinced that the new moon has begun, and that he beholds it through his deeper sight. He only searches for it along with us so his eyes may attain to seeing it and for no other reason, which is different from the others who are present. They're in doubt both outwardly and inwardly about whether the new moon has appeared.

Now this is the difference between the deduction of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and the deduction of those who are veiled. The deduction of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—must be considered free from ignorance and doubt concerning God and whatever contradicts necessary knowledge about Him—He is mighty and glorious—because of the protection from sin which is their special distinction. The latter precludes any doubt and ignorance about Him—He is exalted—for these are both forms of unbelief and the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—are even protected from minor sins, not to mention grave sins. So how do matters stand when it comes to the category of unbelief?

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that these words are the utmost in divine knowledge. I experienced more times than I can count that on the night of the 29th [of Ramaḍān] he informed us of the start of the month while he was indoors under the roof of his house or in the mosque or somewhere else. Then we continued to sit in our place until news reached us of the new moon's appearance. Indeed, we experienced more than once that he informed us, for instance, of the new moon's appearance even when it was pale. We then asked him to come outside with us to observe it. We went outside together and none of us could see it, neither he nor any one of us, because of its smallness and our lack of sharp-sightedness. But we went on looking without seeing it until someone more sharp-sighted than us arrived and he saw it. Sight of it then spread to every area. And he frequently said to me—God be pleased with him: 'This day belongs to Ramaḍān but the people aren't observing the fast because they think it's the last day of Shaʿbān, and this day is the day of ending the fast but the people are still fasting because they think it's the last day of Ramaḍān.' Or: 'This day is the day of ʿArafa but the people imagine it's the 8th [and not the 9th of Dhū'l-Hijja].' Afterwards news then arrived from places that were located at a distance of four days or so

confirming exactly what the Shaykh had said—God be pleased with him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[34]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: (412) ‘It is He Who has sent His apostle with guidance and the true religion in order to render it victorious over every religion, even if this is abhorrent to the polytheists’ (61/9). [I asked:] ‘What’s meant by rendering it victorious over every religion? Is the meaning that it will abolish them, or does it mean its proof will become evident and its truth clearly demonstrated? Or something else?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘God has rendered this pure religion victorious over every religion in every respect: from one viewpoint it’s abolished the others, from another viewpoint its proof has become evident, and from another viewpoint still it has numerous adherents on the face of the earth so that compared with it the other religions are insignificant. If God illuminates someone’s sight and that person looks at the face of the earth—the thriving parts and those that are wastelands—he’ll see in every place peoples who worship God the Sublime and sanctify Him. They follow the Muḥammadan religion. The earth is filled with these lords—God be pleased with them—and they’re found on this continent and on the other continent, i.e. the continent of the people of unbelief, in the caves, the mountains and the plains, and in the thriving parts of the earth and in its wastelands.

What distinguishes this noble religion—God include us among its followers—is that it contains a light which prevents the honored community engaged in the religion from falling into apostasy and returning to unbelief. This is because of God the Sublime’s love for this noble Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! God has gathered for him in his religion numerous praiseworthy qualities which in their totality protect the honored community from apostasy, which isn’t the case with the other religions. The latter don’t possess in full the qualities which prevent apostasy.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Whoever looks at the Well-preserved Tablet and at the apostles on it and their prescriptions of religious law which are recorded on it, knows the permanence of our Prophet Muḥammad’s religious law—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the lack of apostasy on the part of his community. This is because God—He is mighty and glorious—created light and created darkness. Then He created the bondsmen and their communities. Next He made doors for the light through which light

enters their bodies, and He made doors for darkness through which darkness enters their bodies. Then He fixed the prescriptions of religious law and sent the apostles with them so as to open the doors of light by means of them, i.e. by means of the religious prescriptions, and these are the commands among the law. Likewise, He blocked the doors of darkness for their bodies with them and these are the prohibitions in the law. Thus the commands open the doors of light and the prohibitions close (413) the doors of darkness. It's only in the religious law of our Prophet Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—that fulfillment has been achieved in the law consisting of commands which open on behalf of light and prohibitions which close out darkness. This is why it's above all other religious laws and his noble community is above all other communities. And the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has indicated this in his words: "My community will not agree on error."

He said—God be pleased with him: 'When someone who's received illumination looks at previous religious communities and looks at the places they inhabited in their day and age, he sees darkness above their dwellings in the form of black mist like smoke. The darkness goes on drawing closer to them and they abandon their religion one part after another until the darkness settles over them. Their bodies become impregnated with it and the community ends up by leaving its religion—we beseech God for protection from this! And they never find their way back to it. That's one of the ways this religion is rendered victorious over the other religions.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that—if God is willing—something [more] about the doors of darkness will be treated later along with what this contains by way of a warning for those who take heed. But God the Sublime knows best!

[35]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'And some of them have made a covenant with God: "If He bestows on us of His bounty, we will give alms and be among the righteous"' (9/75). The commentators relate that the verse was sent down concerning Tha<sup>l</sup>aba b. Ḥātib.<sup>170</sup> He came to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and asked him to invoke God on his behalf for abundant worldly goods. But the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said to him: 'Oh

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<sup>170</sup> *Usd I*, p. 283, no. 590.

Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba, a little for which you've given thanks is better than a lot for which you're unable to give thanks.'

But he kept asking the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and he finally said: 'By God, oh Apostle of God, I'll give thanks to God for abundance.' And he made a covenant with God to the effect that if He bestowed much wealth on him, he'd give alms. The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—invoked God on his behalf. His cattle then became numerous and they increased the way worms increase. Meanwhile, he'd perform the community prayers and the Friday prayers with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! But when his cattle became numerous, he led them forth and he ceased to perform the community prayers. None the less, he continued to attend the Friday prayers. Now his cattle became so numerous that (414) it wasn't possible for him to attend the Friday prayers because he was busy with them. The Prophet—God's blessings and peace—then asked after him, saying: 'Where's Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba?' They replied: 'Oh Apostle of God, his cattle have increased and he's busy with them and can't attend the community prayers and the Friday prayers.' The Prophet said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Woe unto Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba!' And then he sent—blessings and peace be upon him—two alms-collectors to gather the alms tax and the people came out with their alms to meet them. The two men passed by Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba and they asked him for alms. They recited the scriptural passage that deals with alms-giving and religious duties. Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba remarked: 'This is no more than a *jizya* (poll-tax on non-Muslims), in fact no more than a sister of the *jizya*! Go back now while I think this over!' It was then that the Qur<sup>ʿ</sup>ānic verse was sent down. And so Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba brought the alms but the Prophet said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Verily, God has barred me from accepting it from you.'

Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba poured earth over his head and the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said to him: 'This is your own doing. I gave you a command but you didn't obey me.' When the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was gathered unto God, Tha<sup>ʿ</sup>laba brought his alms to Abū Bakr but he didn't accept them either. Next he brought his alms to ʿUmar but he didn't accept them either. And in the time of ʿUthmān he died.

The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says in the *Ḥāshiya* on al-Bayḍāwī:<sup>171</sup> 'This has been published by Ibn Jarīr [al-Ṭabarī], Ibn Abī Ḥātim, Ibn

<sup>171</sup> See p. 468, fn. 100; 'Ibriziana', p. 141, LXXIX.

Mardūya, al-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī in the sections on faith (*al-īmān*) as a *ḥadīth* of Abū Umāma.<sup>172</sup>

And I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘Was this man one of the Companions and is this story true?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘I looked and I didn’t see anyone of the Companions of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who committed a sin like this. And I didn’t see that this story had ever happened.’ I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is the way the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar in his book *al-Iṣāba fī l-ṣaḥāba*<sup>173</sup> indicates his rejection of the story and its lack of a reliable chain of transmission. Consult him in the entry (*tarjama*) on the said Tha<sup>c</sup>laba in the above-mentioned book. I’ve reported the matter in accordance with its sense and I’ve known of it for a long time. But God the Sublime knows best!

[36]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘And when your Lord took from the offspring of Adam their progeny from their loins’ (7/172). (415) [I asked:] ‘Did this occur in the world of spirits or was it when God created Adam that He brought forth from his loins his progeny and installed in them reason and capacity for speech so that they answered the way they answered? Or is the Qur’ānic verse the equivalent of illustrative metaphor (*isti‘āra tamthīliyya*)? And this to the effect that He expressed figuratively the enabling of Adam’s offspring to know His lordliness and His unicity as well as their capacity to do so, in that He established for them indications of His lordliness and installed in them forms of reason through which they understand by<sup>174</sup> being summoned to bear witness and by acknowledgement. In accordance with illustrative metaphor, enabling is like summoning as a witness and capacity is like acknowledgement.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The story takes place in the world of spirits. When God the Sublime wished to summon them as witnesses against themselves, He ordered Isrāfīl to blow his trumpet. The spirits then experienced an immense fright such as the people will experience on the Day of Resurrection when the trumpet of resurrection will be sounded, or an even greater fright. God the Sublime then removed the veil from them and made them hear His eternal word. Thereupon the spirits were divided according to the strength and the weakness of their lights. There were spirits that

<sup>172</sup> *Siyar* III, p. 517, no. 126; died 100/718.

<sup>173</sup> *Iṣāba*, I, pp. 400 f., no. 930.

<sup>174</sup> From here to the end of the paragraph the sense is uncertain.

answered out of love and these were the spirits of the believers. And there were spirits that answered reluctantly and these were the spirits of the infidels. There were also differences in rank among those who answered out of love. Likewise, some gained strength upon hearing the eternal word, while others grew weaker. There were those who swayed to and fro in pleasure at hearing the eternal word. And there were some whom God made into a mercy and they offered help to others in acquiring strength. Here the ranks of spiritual masters and disciples appeared. From that day their spirits recognized one another.

Then the power of the eternal word prevailed over all the spirits. They started to fly forth from their places in Barzakh [in excitement] and descended to the earth in order to grow calm. Their places were divided into three kinds according to the descent that occurred in them.

1) The kind in which only the spirits of the believers came down, one group after another.

2) The kind in which only the spirits of the infidels came down, one group after another.

3) And the kind in which the two categories came down together.

(416) As for the place in which only the spirits of the believers came down, this is the place where the people with faith in God and knowledge of Him dwell, and an infidel will never dwell there. It's the opposite with the second kind of place.

As for the third kind of place, both categories dwell in it. The last of them to come down in it receives a seal because of this. If they belong to the spirits endowed with felicity [the saved], they receive the seal of the people of faith. If the opposite is the case, the opposite takes place. It can be that in the same place a group of felicitous comes down and then a group of wretched spirits [the damned]. Then a group of felicitous spirits comes down, followed by a group of wretched spirits, and so on and so forth until the final sealing takes place. If the person who's received illumination looks at a place where the polytheists dwell today, he knows whether or not the believers will dwell there after them. That's because he looks at the descent of the spirits to earth on the day of: "Am I not your Lord?" and then looks at what descended after the present group. If only the spirits of infidels are on hand, he knows the people of Islam will never live there. But if after this group some of the spirits of the blessed descend, he knows that it will become the abode of Islam (*dār al-islām*).'



He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And he also knows this in two other ways. The **first** is that he looks at the land of polytheism and if he perceives people of illumination and Friendship with God are increasing there, he knows it will become the abode of Islam. If he looks at it and doesn’t see any of them at all dwelling there, he knows it’s the abode of God’s wrath.’

And I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘If a person receives illumination and he’s in the land of polytheism, what should he do?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The people of the invisible realm (*ahl al-ghayb*) will give him help and will come to him in their bodies and teach him external religious science (learning). As for science of the interior, if it isn’t accompanied by external science, few of those who possess it receive illumination.’<sup>175</sup> And he said to me another time: ‘Science of the interior is like someone who writes ninety-nine lines in gold and external science is like someone who writes in ink the line that completes one hundred. Despite this, if that black line weren’t with the mentioned lines of gold, they’d be of no use at all. Few of those who wrote the lines would become a Muslim.’

Another time he said to me: ‘External science is like a lantern which lights up the night and is (417) of great value in the nocturnal darkness. Science of the interior is like the rising of the sun and the splendor of its lights at noontime. But sometimes the owner of the lantern says: “This lantern in my hand is of no value. God has freed me from it through the bright light of day.” And he extinguishes it. There and then the daylight disappears and he returns to the darkness of night. The persistence of his daylight depends on his not extinguishing the lantern that’s in his hand.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And how many a person has made a slip in this matter and his daylight didn’t return to him unless he took hold of the lantern and lit it a second time! God may give him success in this or He may not give him success. We beseech God for protection from this—through His grace and His generosity!’<sup>176</sup>

[And he continued:] ‘The **second** way is that he looks at the land of the polytheists and if he perceives supernaturally that the mosques are full and the community prayers are being performed, he knows the land will belong to the people of Islam. But if he doesn’t see this in the land, he knows it will be destroyed and engulfed in darkness.’

<sup>175</sup> From: ‘As for science of the interior...’ cited in *Rimāh* II, p. 138, ll. -7 f.

<sup>176</sup> From: ‘Science of the interior...’ cited in *Rimāh* II, p. 138 to p. 139, l. 1.

And he recounted stories about this matter—God be pleased with him! Perhaps we'll relate them in what comes later in this work—if God is willing! But God the Sublime knows best!

[37]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about what happened to the brothers of Joseph. The reason for this was that a question was presented to me. The text of its sense is: 'Are the prophets protected from sin before prophethood, just as they're protected from sin after it? Is there a consensus about this or is it disputed? And are small sins in this matter the same as big ones or not? If our shaykh has understood us, he must write out for us what he thinks and what we're obliged to attach our heart to regarding the brothers of our lord Joseph—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon them as well! Are they prophets or not? And assuming they're prophets, what's the explanation for their behavior? After all, you know what they did!' And I wrote down this question in my notebook and I wanted to give an answer to it.

As for the protection of prophets from sin, this is dealt with by what adepts of speculative theology (*kalām*) have said—adepts such as the author of the *Mawāqif*<sup>177</sup> and others.

As for what happened to Joseph's brothers, this is treated in a work I came across by the *hāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī which he entitled *Dafʿ al-taʿassuf ʿan ikhwat Yūsuf* (*Repudiating Aberration on the Part of Joseph's Brothers*).<sup>178</sup> And I wanted to give a summary of it in my answer.

The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—then read the question in my notebook and with his own noble hand he wrote the following text:

'The answer is—and God gives success in attaining what's correct—that the prophets—the best (418) of blessings and peace be upon them—are protected from sin both before and after prophethood. Moreover, what Joseph's brothers did—the best of blessings and peace be upon him and upon our Prophet—was ordered in their interiors and the order came from God. Their being reproached for this is only on the level of appearances, because what's concealed [in this matter] is a secret with God. Peace!

The humble bondsman of his Lord, Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Sijilmāsi al-Lamaṭi has written this. God be with him—amen!'

And he attributed the answer to me—God give us benefit through him—because the question was directed to me.

<sup>177</sup> *Mawāqif*, pp. 358 ff.

<sup>178</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 143, XCI; *Hāwī* I, pp. 298-300, no. 35.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Most reproach directed against the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—is of this kind. It’s as if God the Sublime commands them with a command in their interior, whereas he’s commanded them to do the contrary on the level of appearances. These are the sins which they appear to commit—blessings and peace be upon them!’

I asked: ‘If the action was by means of an internal command of God the Sublime, what sin has been committed? And what’s the meaning of the reproach for it since the one who did it, did it with permission?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, but when he sees the external command and finds he’s transgressed against it, this appears as a sin in his eye because simply transgressing against what’s external is a sin to him.’

I said: ‘This is apparent with regard to his seeing it as a sin but isn’t apparent with regard to reproach. For indeed, the One Who commanded him outwardly is the same One Who commanded him inwardly. And the internal command is like something which abrogates or renders specific the external command. In that case there’s no reproach.’

And he added—God be pleased with him: ‘Revelation comes down in accordance with the spontaneous thoughts of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them! Thus if something occurs in a prophet’s awareness or he says something in his carnal soul, revelation comes down concerning it. If it appears to him that he’s sinned, he says so in his carnal soul and begins to reproach it. Then revelation concerning the reproach comes down in accordance with the thought.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And whoever wants to be acquainted with the thoughts of prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and what their carnal souls were saying, let him look at the books that were sent down to them. Indeed, they’re (419) analogous to what’s in their thoughts. So if the books offer sincere advice, the prophets spoke sincere advice and wanted this for mankind. If the books brought glad tidings, the prophets experienced expansiveness and wanted what contained profit for the people. If the books brought warning and harsh threats, the prophets underwent contraction and became self-absorbed. This makes clear for you the benefit of the prophets’ protection from sin—blessings and peace be upon them—and you realize that all their spontaneous thoughts are true and that their misgivings all come from God the Sublime.’

[38]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘You’re afraid of the people, whereas God has a greater claim for you to fear Him’ (33/37). [I asked:] ‘How can God the Sublime reproach His Prophet who’s the lord of the knowers of God and the chief of the prophets and the apostles?’

He answered me—God be pleased with him—with this thought, saying: ‘When Zayd consulted the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—about divorcing Zaynab and he ordered him to keep her and to fear God in his association with her, the Prophet already knew—blessings and peace be upon him—that she’d belong to him but he concealed this and didn’t make it known. He turned against himself with reproach and said to his thoughts: “You’re afraid of the people, whereas God has a greater claim for you to fear Him.” He proceeded to reproach himself with this in his interior. God—He is exalted—then made known what was in his interior—blessings and peace be upon him—and sent down revelation concerning it.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Whoever has received illumination and has reflected attentively on the heavenly books, finds in them the light of the eternal word and the light of the nature of the state the Prophet was in when revelation came down to him. (420) Sometimes he’s in a state of contraction. When the Qur’ānic verse comes down, it contains the light of the eternal word and the light of contraction which his body was absorbed in at the time. And sometimes he’s in a state of expansion when the Qur’ānic verse comes down, and it contains the light of the eternal word and the light of expansion. The first of these is eternal and the second is contingent. And then sometimes he’s in a state of humility when the Qur’ānic verse comes down and it contains the eternal word and the light of humility. Every verse is like this. It isn’t without something from the nature of the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And it’s the same with the verse: “You’re afraid of the people, whereas God has a greater claim for you to fear Him.” It contains the light of the eternal word, as well as the light of the nature of the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—at the moment of its descent, and that was the light of reproach. Now the eternal word is from God and not from the Prophet, whereas the reproach is from the Prophet and not from God—He is mighty and glorious!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘When the people of illumination engage in explaining the Qur’ān among themselves—God be pleased with them—they’re only concerned with the causes

of its descent. However, by this isn't meant the causes of its descent which are given in external religious learning but rather the states and lights in which the body of the Prophet was absorbed at the time of its descent—God's blessings and peace be upon him! On this subject one hears from them things which are indescribable because they delve into the oceans that are in his interior—blessings and peace be upon him! Here I mean the ocean of Adamhood, contraction, expansion, prophethood, the spirit, apostleship and perfect science. This has been dealt with earlier in connection with: "This Qur'ān has been sent down upon seven letters." But God the Sublime knows best!

[39]

And I also asked him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'God forgive you! Why did you give them permission before it was clear to you which of them spoke the truth and you knew which were the liars?' (9/43).

And he answered me with something close to the following. He said: 'God the Sublime ordered the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—to forgive and to pardon with a kind pardon, and to associate in a friendly manner and urged this until He said: "If you had been harsh and hard-hearted, they would have scattered from around you. So pardon them and pray for their forgiveness, and consult with them in the matter" (3/159).

(421) And this was his practice with the people. Thus when the hypocrites came to him and asked his permission to stay behind and presented their excuses, he gave them permission to stay behind, though he was aware of their hypocrisy. This was because of his mercy and because of what God had ordered him about associating with them in a friendly manner. God had urged him to be like this with them in other Qur'ānic verses. So this is how he behaved toward them outwardly. Then in his interior he spoke of the descent of a verse which would disgrace them. But God hindered him from setting about to disgrace them because of the mercy in him and because of God's instruction to him. Thus in his interior he spoke of their disgrace in a way which showed that it came from God and not from him, because of the shame that was in him—God's blessings and peace be upon him! This was as in God the Sublime's words: "That was harmful to the Prophet and he's ashamed before you; but God isn't ashamed before the truth" (33/53).

He wanted the verse to come down in the form of a reproach to him so it would be further from suspicion, consist more purely of sincere advice, and more effectively restrain them from engaging

another time in hypocrisy with the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Indeed, God the Sublime is his advocate against whoever is hypocritical toward him, and is his litigant and bearer of proofs. Moreover, the form of this reproach contains various advantages. On the internal level it isn’t a reproach. Rather the beloved acted on behalf of the beloved in the conflict and nothing more.’

He said: ‘No one should imagine that the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—didn’t know the difference between the truthful and the liar among those who presented excuses. How could this have been concealed from him, given that someone who’s received illumination in this day and age knows the difference between the truthful and the liar of that time? All people with illumination obtained what they obtained through loving him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And they were given to drink a single hair’s amount of his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Earlier when the *ḥadīth*: “This Qur’ān has been sent down upon seven letters” was discussed, the nature of the Prophet’s knowledge (science) was dealt with—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that in the view of those who’ve reflected on the words of the Qur’ānic commentators this account of the verse is the best that’s been given.

Al-Bayḍāwī says—God forgive him and forgive us: “‘May God forgive you’ is an allusion to his mistake in giving permission. Forgiveness is one of its immediate consequences.’<sup>179</sup>

The Shaykh al-Islām Zakariyyā’ [al-Anṣārī] says in his *Hāshiya*<sup>180</sup>: ‘He follows al-Zamakhsharī.<sup>181</sup> Al-Ṭayyibī<sup>182</sup> says: (422) “Al-Zamakhsharī commits a detestable error in this explanation. I don’t understand how it escaped him—he being an eminent figure with regard to extracting subtleties of meaning—that in similar indications, i.e. beginning with forgiveness, this is a declaration of esteem for the person addressed, honoring him and his dignity.” And it’s as he says, because something like this doesn’t require a sin to have occurred beforehand. Rather its being at the beginning indicates esteem, as if you were saying to someone you’re extolling: “May God forgive you! What you’ve done on my behalf! And God be pleased with you, what’s your answer to my words?”

<sup>179</sup> *Anwār al-tanzīl* I, p. 406.

<sup>180</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 141, LXXX; al-Anṣārī died 926/1520.

<sup>181</sup> Cf. editor’s fn., I, p. 421; GAL I, p. 292.

<sup>182</sup> Probably GAL, S II, p. 67; died 743/1343.

For this reason al-Taftāzānī<sup>183</sup> says: "The author", i.e. al-Zamakhsharī, "shouldn't have presented this repugnant explanation after God showed His Apostle respect by beginning with forgiveness, by mentioning the permission—which indicates loftiness of rank and the power to act—and by putting the words in the question form. There was no intention to censure, albeit people may say: 'God forgive you' when someone omits the most appropriate and the best, but here it's used out of reverence and esteem, as in the case of: 'May God forgive you, what you've done on my behalf!'"

And the ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūfī says in his *Hāshiya*: "In this bad explanation he follows al-Zamakhsharī, and the author of the *Intiṣāf*<sup>184</sup> says: "It's one of two things. Either this isn't the intended meaning and so he's mistaken, or it's meant but God uses metonymy to express it by way of glorifying and elevating the Prophet's rank. Does God the Sublime not make use of good manners, especially for the sake of Muṣṭafā—God's blessings and peace be upon him—?" Then he reports the words of al-Ṭayyibī and al-Taftāzānī, and then he says: "The *qādī* 'Iyād in the *Shifā*'<sup>185</sup> says: "This is by way of opening words such as: *God give you prosperity!* and *God give you strength!*" With regard to this passage and in refutation of al-Zamakhsharī, al-Ṣadr Ḥasan b. Muḥammad b. Ṣāliḥ al-Nābulusī has written a book entitled *Jannat al-nāẓir wa-junnat al-munāẓir fī'l-intiṣār li-Abī'l-Qāsim al-tāhir (ṣallā'llāhu 'alayhi wa-sallama)*.<sup>186</sup> Because of this and other similar blemishes people of religion and scrupulosity have prohibited the reading and teaching of the *Kashshāf*. On this subject Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī has written a book entitled (423) *Sabab al-inkifāf 'an iqrā' al-Kashshāf*.<sup>187</sup> Consult it in the above-mentioned *Hāshiya*. This work cites the whole of it. But God the Sublime knows best!

[40]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'We never punish until We have sent forth an apostle' (17/15).<sup>188</sup> [I asked:] 'What's meant by the punishment that's denied here: does it occur in this world or in the hereafter? And is the arrival of the call to God a precondition in both worlds, as

183 Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 422; GAL I, p. 215; died 791/1389.

184 Unidentified.

185 *Shifā*' I, p. 79.

186 Unidentified; vocalization uncertain.

187 Not found in GAL.

188 On this idea see van Ess, 'Ġāḥiz', pp. 174-76; idem, *Īcī*, pp. 138 ff.

the Qurʾānic verse requires? Or is this not a precondition, as indicated by the *ḥadīths* about an imbecile and people like that who don't understand speech? In fact, on the Day of Resurrection, they'll be tested by means of a fire which they'll be ordered to enter. If they obey, they'll enter Paradise but if they're disobedient, they'll enter Hell-fire.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The arrival of the call to God is a precondition for punishment that occurs in the world, punishment such as being swallowed up by the earth, stoning and suffering affliction from heaven, etc. These were punishments that in the past befell the peoples who disobeyed their apostles. Thus God the Sublime's words: "We never punish until We have sent forth an apostle" mean: "We've never punished a people by having the earth swallow them up, etc., until their apostle had come to them and the proof of God had been presented to them." As for punishment in the hereafter, it doesn't depend on an apostle being sent forth. If it depended on an apostle being sent forth, no one from Gog and Magog<sup>189</sup> would enter Hell-fire, whereas they make up the greater part of those who'll enter Hell.'

Then I said: 'There's a *ḥadīth* to the effect that the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—went to them on the night of his Night Journey and called them to worship God and profess His oneness but they refused. Thus they'll be in Hell-fire with everyone else among Adam's offspring who disobeyed.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This isn't so!'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that this is what the *ḥuffāẓ* among the *ḥadīth* scholars say. The above-mentioned *ḥadīth* contains in its chain of transmission Nūḥ b. Abī Maryam Abū ʿIṣma al-Ḍabbī al-Jāmiʿ al-Waḍḍāʿ (the Forger).<sup>190</sup> Ibn Ḥibbān says about him: 'Verily, he's collected everything but the truth!'

I would add that I didn't wish to cite at length *ḥadīths* about imbeciles and persons like that or what eminent (424) commentators on the Qurʾān say about this noble verse or, for that matter, what outstanding scholars of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl*) say about it. The purpose here is to collect the words of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and if it weren't for the great extent of ignorance among the people, I'd have limited myself exclusively to

<sup>189</sup> A multitudinous horde of barbaric peoples who occupy lands far to the East. At the end of time they'll break forth from their territorial boundaries and bring devastation to the world. Cf. EQ, s. n. Gog and Magog.

<sup>190</sup> *Mīzān* IV, p. 279, no. 9143.



that and I wouldn't have cited *ḥadīths* and suchlike which are proof in support of what he said.

[41]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the reason for the variation in God the Sublime's words concerning the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Your companion is not possessed' (81/22) and His words concerning Gabriel: 'A noble messenger...' up to '...who is obeyed as well as trustworthy' (81/19-20).

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The Qur'ān comes down upon the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—from the light of the True, and when he gives it expression, the form of expression it takes depends on the prevailing state in the Prophet's body which may be humility or some other state. In the present situation it consists of humility on his part—God's blessings and peace be upon him—toward Gabriel with reverence for him and a humble attitude toward himself.'

And he said to me another time—God be pleased with him: 'He related His word: "Your companion is not possessed" in order to confirm what preceded it and to corroborate what's ascribed to Gabriel—peace be upon him! It's as if He says: "This that We've said concerning Gabriel has been brought to you by someone whose truthfulness and trustworthiness you know as well as his understanding of what he says. Now if the informer is of this description, one trusts what he reports. He's not possessed so that he speaks about something he doesn't know." So the purpose of His words: "Your companion is not possessed" is to make what preceded enter the minds of those being addressed. The purpose isn't to characterize the Prophet's state—God's blessings and peace be upon him! So it may be said that He confined Himself to characterizing him with this negative description, whereas in the characterization of Gabriel's state—peace be upon him—He offered a lofty description. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[42]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'It isn't for us to return to it except if God our Lord so wills' (7/89). (425) [I asked:] 'What's this exception presented by *Shu'ayb*<sup>191</sup>—peace be upon him—? Indeed, an exception necessarily implies doubt and lack of certainty with regard to the state one is in.'

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<sup>191</sup> Muslims sometimes equate *Shu'ayb* with Jethro, the father of Moses.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Making an exception in this case is pure recourse to God the Sublime and that amounts to pure faith. Indeed, the people who’ve received illumination and especially the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them—see [directly] God the Sublime’s action in themselves. They see that they have no power and no strength and that the action which appears to be through their bodies is actually from God—He is exalted! So if someone who’s endowed with this state indicates an exception, he’s become immersed in the ocean of divine knowledge (*‘irfān*) and he’s attained the highest degree of faith. But God the Sublime knows best!’

[43]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: ‘By the star when it sinks, your comrade has not strayed nor has he erred’ (53/1-2). [I asked:] ‘Why did he swear to the truth of his apostleship upon a star, since a star is only a stone among other stones? What’s the relationship between the star and the light of apostleship so that he’d swear to [the truth of] apostleship upon a star?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘He didn’t swear upon a star because it’s a star or a stone but because of the light of truth it contains. Its light of truth is the light of right guidance by means of a star in the darkness of land and sea.’

He then clarified this with a similitude. He said: ‘Two men set out on a journey and they lost their way. They had no provisions and companions. They were sure they’d perish; they had no escape and redemption. As for the one man, he had a knowledge of the star which would guide him in the direction of his journey. He watched for it until it was night and then he followed it until he reached his final goal and his destination. Thus God the Sublime saved him. As for the other man, he had no knowledge of the star and how to be guided by it. He didn’t follow his comrade with regard to his knowledge. So he went on wandering in valleys of error until he perished. After he perished, he became like ashes as a result of the heat and cold that passed over his body. This is how it is for the people with the Apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! They’re like one of these two men. One group believes in him. They consider him to be true and they follow him. (426) Through him they reach the Garden of felicity and the indescribable prodigious gift, just like the first man who reached a place with provisions and companions. He attained the felicity and shady shelter that he desired and longed for. The other group denies him and continues in God’s

wrath until they die and Hell consumes them with its fire and its severe frost, just as the body of the second man was consumed by heat and cold. The likeness here is between that by which one swears and that which one affirms by swearing. In reality one swears upon an individual thing from among things possessing the light of truth which people know for the sake of affirming another individual thing which they don't know.'

And I asked: 'What's meant by His words: "...when it sinks"?''

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This means when it declines from the middle of the sky because while it's in the middle of the sky, no one is guided by it. In that case it stands still without declining in any particular direction and no guidance results from it. But God the Sublime knows best!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the Qurʾānic commentators—God be pleased with them—have expressed many opinions about the verse. Najm al-Dīn al-Ghayṭī<sup>192</sup> in his work on the Night Journey (*isrāʾ*) and the Ascension (*miʿrāj*)—and this is an important work—has examined these opinions thoroughly. If you study this, you'll understand the nobility of what the Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him! If it weren't for fear of prolixity and departing from our purpose, we'd present these opinions here. But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's word: '*al-Ṣamad*' (the Eternal): 'This is a name of which all created things are given to drink, trees, stones, clods of earth, what contains spirit and what's devoid of spirit. But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—about the People of the Battlements (*ahl al-aʿrāf*):<sup>193</sup> 'They're like Sayyidī So-and-so and Sayyidī So-and-so.' And he indicated people who'd received the great illumination among the knowers of God—God be pleased with them! He said—God be pleased with him: 'In Paradise they possess elevated dwellings in which they're high above the inhabitants of Paradise—like the high minaret in the city of Fez. The people of these dwellings look down from them at those below them, and their elevated dwellings are the Battlements.' This is an approximation of the similitude he used—God be pleased with him!

(427) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that concerning the People of the Battlements there are various opinions which the ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī

<sup>192</sup> This person and his work remain unidentified.

<sup>193</sup> An allusion to surah VII of the Qurʾān: *The Battlements*.

mentions in *al-Budūr al-sāfira*.<sup>194</sup> Among them is the opinion that they're Ḥamza and the martyrs. Moreover, this is close to what the Shaykh related—God be pleased with him! But God the Sublime knows best!

[44]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'Verily, We have given you a clear victory (*fath*) so that God may forgive you your former and your latter sins' (48/1-2).

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'What's meant by victory is vision (*mushāhada*), i.e. vision of God the Sublime. In God's pre-eternal knowledge—He is exalted—it was already established that human beings wouldn't all know Him, for if they all knew Him there would only be one House (of existence), whereas God the Sublime had decreed that He'd have two Houses [this world and the hereafter]. Thus human beings were veiled from God the Sublime—except those on whom God bestowed mercy—and He hindered them from beholding (*mushāhada*) His action—He is exalted—and from beholding His person—He is exalted! However, if He were to remove the covering from them, they'd behold Him—He is exalted—as He has said: "He's with you wherever you may be" (57/3). "We are closer to him than the jugular vein" (50/16). "And when My bondsmen question you about Me, verily I am close by" (2/186). "And neither fewer than that nor more, but He is with them wherever they may be" (58/7).

They see all their actions as created by Him—He is exalted—and that He's the One Who does the actions, not they. Indeed, they're fashioned vessels and bodies, and it's He Who moves them as He wishes—He is exalted—as God the Sublime has said: "And God created you and what you make" (37/96). According to this view, no one ever disobeys Him because disobedience only occurs on the part of someone who's veiled and unaware, someone who's forgetful of his Lord at the time of his disobedience.'

And he said: 'But even if the believers are convinced that it's God Who acts through them, Who wills their actions, still this conviction is sometimes present in their mind and sometimes absent. And the cause of this is the veil. Their conviction is a matter of pure faith without seeing; it isn't based on vision and direct sight. Whenever God the Sublime has mercy on someone, He removes the veil from him and bestows on him vision of Himself—He is exalted! Then he

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<sup>194</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 143, XCII; *Budūr*, p. 400, under no. 1273.

only sees what's a truth—from the truth and unto the truth. This is what's meant by 'a clear victory (*fath*)'.

(428) Then I asked: 'And when did this occur [to the Prophet]?'

He replied: 'In his childhood—God's blessings and peace be upon him—for he wasn't veiled from God the Sublime.'

And I asked: 'This victory [*fath*=illumination] is found in every prophet, indeed in every knower of God, but what special quality does it have in our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Victory (illumination) varies in its power and weakness. In each person it depends on what he can support. Now the power that was in the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with regard to reason, spirit, the carnal soul and the body, the innermost secret and the memory, didn't exist in anyone else. If all the people who received illumination (*fath*) among the prophets and others as well were gathered together, and the power referred to were placed upon them, they'd all dissolve and their bodies would collapse.

As for what's meant by "sin" in God the Sublime's words: "...your former and your latter sins", the cause for this is unawareness and the darkness of the veil which is in the origin of the earthen body's formation.' He said: 'This unawareness and veil that belongs to sins is like a rotting, dirty garment that flies settle on. When this garment is worn by someone, flies settle on him but when he takes the garment off, the flies leave him. The garment is a similitude for the veil, and the flies are a similitude for the sins. So if someone calls that garment flies, it's an acceptable name. Similarly, what's designated here as sin is the veil. And the designation "former" and "latter" is an allusion to the veil's disappearance entirely, as if He's saying: "*Verily, We have given you a clear victory* so that the veil disappears from you entirely and Our bounty to you becomes complete and you're guided and given victory." Indeed, there's no bounty superior to the bounty of the veil's disappearance, and there's no guidance superior to the guidance of divine insights (*ma'arif*), and no victory more far-reaching than the victory of someone whose state is like this.'

Then I asked: 'Is this exclusive to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—?'

He replied: 'Yes, it is.' And I asked: 'Why is that?' He replied: 'Because the Prophet is the fountain-head of all things.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is why the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—say on the Resurrection: 'Bring

Muḥammad, a bondsman whom God the Sublime has forgiven his former and his latter sins.'

(429) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—is among the most precious divine insights (*ma'ārif*) and the subtlest of subtleties. It's more worthy of the Prophet's dignity and more expressive of his sublimity and awesomeness. It more completely accords with his sinlessness as agreed upon by Muslim consensus, and more fully fulfills the Prophet's right—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Moreover, it's more suited to the composition of the Qur'ānic verse in question and the beauty of its wording. God give him the greatest of rewards on our behalf!

Countless numbers of people have spoken about this Qur'ānic verse. The meaning which the Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him—was in their minds but they didn't express it clearly. How much the great al-Subkī circled around it and how the mind of Abū Yaḥyā al-Sharīf, known as Ibn Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Sharīf al-Tilimsānī,<sup>195</sup> flew in search of it! He eventually postulated three grades for sin and three grades for forgiveness. Regarding sin, it has an origin, i.e. the carnal soul, it has a reality, i.e. the offense, and it has an effect, i.e. the darkness that occurs in the heart because of the referred to sins, as in God the Sublime's words: 'No indeed, what they were acquiring has become rust on their hearts' (83/14) and in the *ḥadīth*: 'If a bondsman commits a sin, a black mark occurs in his heart.'

And Ibn Abī 'Abd Allāh says: 'Calling the origin and the effect a sin is a metaphor, in the manner of calling something by the name of its cause with regard to its origin and by the name of its result with regard to its effect.

As for forgiveness (*maghfira*), it comes from *ghafr* which is "to veil" and veiling has three degrees: the first, which is the strongest, is that the thing doesn't exist at all, being veiled in the darkness of non-existence. The second is that it exists but we possess no sense organ for perceiving it at all. The third is that it exists and we possess a sense organ to perceive it with but between us and it there's a veil. If the sun isn't in the sky at all, it's veiled in non-existence. If it's on hand and the one looking at it is blind, it's veiled from him because of the non-existence of the sense organ. And if clouds stand between us and the sun, the sun is veiled from us by them. This is the weakest of the degrees of veiling, for once the clouds have gone the sun will

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<sup>195</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 143 f., XCIII-IV; unidentified; see here p. 803, fn. 100.

be seen.' (430) And he goes on: 'Forgiveness with regard to the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is meant in the sense of non-existence, and sin with regard to him is meant in the sense of origin as well as reality. Moreover, there's no doubt that the forgiveness of both of these, i.e. their being engulfed in non-existence, necessitates forgiveness of the effect, and not the reverse. For this reason it isn't correct that sin with regard to him signifies the effect because effacing the effect and its being engulfed in non-existence doesn't mean removing the sin's reality which is the offense, and because effacing the effect with the persistence of the offense's reality contradicts the sinlessness [of the Prophet], and because if this were the intended sense, other sinners would share with him [in this] to the same extent.

If what's meant by "sin" in the verse is the reality, i.e. the offense, the meaning of *min* in His words *min dhanbika* would be 'an, i.e. so that God may forgive you what preceded your sins—which is the origin—and what came after them—which is the effect. And if what's meant by "sin" is the reality and a metaphor, the meaning of *al-mutaqaddim* (what precedes), which is the reality, and *al-muta'akhkhir* (what comes after), which is the effect, is a metaphor.'

But interpreting *al-faṭḥ* (victory/illumination) in accordance with what the Shaykh said has eluded him—God have mercy on him—and this is the essence (*rūḥ*) of the question. He interprets it as divine predetermination but doesn't explain what's been predetermined, so that what he elaborates afterwards may prove true in accordance with it—as is clear to anyone who reads his words.

The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī has written a small fascicle<sup>196</sup> on the question in which he collects the opinions of the religious scholars, and so has the previously mentioned *sharīf* Abū Yaḥyā b. Abī 'Abd Allāh al-Sharīf al-Tilimsānī. The shaykh Abū'l-'Abbās Sayyidī Aḥmad Bābā al-Sūdānī<sup>197</sup> combines these two works in a work of his own on this question. God have mercy on them all through His grace and His generosity, and give us benefit through them and their knowledge—amen! But God the Sublime knows best!

[45]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's words: 'Who knows the Unseen and does not disclose His Unseen to anyone' (72/26), and God the Sublime's words: 'Verily, God has knowledge of the Hour' (31/34), as well as about the

<sup>196</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 143, XCIII.

<sup>197</sup> 'Ibrīziana', pp. 143 f., XCV; al-Sūdānī died 1036/1627; cf. Zouber, *Aḥmad Bābā de Tombouctou*.

Prophet's words—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'There are five things which only God knows.'

[I asked:] 'How can this be reconciled with what He reveals to the Friends who are knowers of God—God be pleased with them—by way of unveilings and information about what's hidden inside women's wombs and other things? Indeed, this is a well-known matter to do with the thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends of God—God be pleased with them!'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The purpose of the restriction in God the Sublime's words and in the *ḥadīth* (431) is to exclude soothsayers, fortunetellers and anyone with a supporter among the Jinn, whom the ignorant Arabs believed had awareness and knowledge of the Unseen so that they'd consult them as arbiters and resort to what they said. God the Sublime intended to eliminate this depraved belief from their minds. He therefore sent down these verses and others like them as if God the Sublime meant to eliminate this truly and effectively. And He filled the sky with powerful guardians and shooting stars. The purpose of all this was to lead the bondsmen to the truth and to direct them away from the false. And the Friends of God—God be pleased with them—are on the side of the truth, not of the false. Therefore they aren't excluded by the restriction in this verse and others like it.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'We say about this and similar matters that if the words are general and the arrows of light contained in them refer specifically to certain individuals and not others, then when the knower of God hears a general pronouncement, he looks at these arrows and if he sees that they've descended on So-and-so and So-and-so, i.e. only on Zayd, 'Amr, Khālīd and Bakr, he knows that they alone are meant and no one else, and he isn't included in the words. If the pronouncement is general and he looks at the arrows and sees that they've descended on all individuals and no individual is left out, he then knows that everyone is meant.' He said: 'Our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—knew this before the Qur'ānic verse emerged from his noble speech because the light of the arrows had previously entered his heart so that he was aware of what God intended—He is sublime!'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that he's referring—God be pleased with him—to a form of the general which intends specificity, as well as something general which retains its generality. However, al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—didn't know the terminology, even though he was ahead of those schooled in terminology as far as



attaining the essence of the meanings. If the most learned of the scholars of external science, the strongest and most cunning in debate, and the best informed among them, were to come to him and attempt to oppose him, he wouldn't be able to support al-Dabbāgh. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—would be ahead of him in attaining the meanings and would block his every path so that his opponent's only course would be capitulation and submission before his words. I often said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, no one is so deceived in your regard (432) as are the scholars of external religious learning. If they'd only spend time with you and be guided by you in discussion concerning the categories of religious learning, their deeper insight would become enlightened regarding these matters and the difficulties inherent in them would be removed from them. I had the book *al-Tabṣīr* by Abū'l-Muẓaffar al-Isfarāyīnī<sup>198</sup> on the seventy-two religious groups. Al-Dabbāgh used to say to me—God be pleased with him: 'Tell me the specious arguments of the people of heresy and question me about the difficulty these contain.' And every specious argument I related to him he always resolved in his first reply and then advanced to other forms of knowledge and divine insights.

And during the illness which caused his death, I spoke with him—God be pleased with him—about definitive proof (*burhān al-qaṭʿ*) and practical proof (*burhān al-taṭbīq*), and I heard from him secrets about this and obtained forms of knowledge concerning it which the scholars (433) of speculative theology (*al-kalām*) have never spoken of. Then he taught me—God be pleased with him—the Oneness of God (*al-tawḥīd*) of the Sufi knowers of God. And he told me: 'This is what the Companions of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—believed in.'

After I'd understood what he indicated—God be pleased with him—I said: 'Oh Sayyidī, if the people knew this truth concerning God's Oneness, the Muslim community wouldn't have split into seventy-three groups.' He replied: 'Yes! And this is what the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—wanted to write for them in a book at the time of his death so that after him his community would never fall into error.'

Now let me return to the purpose at hand and say that I put it to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'Indeed, the specification in the Qurʾānic verse: "Who knows the Unseen and does not disclose His

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198 The book survives and has been edited; al-Isfarāyīnī died 471/1078.

Unseen to anyone" (72/26) which applies to the Apostle, excludes the Friend of God and therefore a contradiction still remains.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'In fact it excludes others than the Apostle but, as for the Friend of God, he's included in the verse with the Apostle.' Then he presented a similitude: 'It was the time of tillage.' And he said: 'If a great man such as Sayyidi So-and-so were to wish to go forth to see his tilled land and to inspect the peasants on his land, some of his young retainers and his dearest companions would necessarily go forth with him. If he arrives at the place, becomes informed about it and understands what's there, the retainers, companions and attendants who are with him have something of this conferred on them. And it's the same with the Apostle. He necessarily has some bondsmen, servants, dear friends and companions from his community. So if the Apostle is informed about a hidden thing, then the elite of his community necessarily have something of this conferred on them.'

(434) Next I said to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'The scholars of external religious learning among the specialists in *ḥadīths*, and others as well, disagree about whether the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—knew the five things mentioned in God the Sublime's words: "Verily, God has knowledge of the Hour; He sends down the rain and He knows what's inside wombs. No soul knows what it will earn tomorrow and no soul knows what land it will die in. But God is all-knowing and informed" (31/34).'

He replied—God be pleased with him and with our lords the religious scholars: 'How could the matter of the five things be unknown to him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—since none of the people with the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) among his noble community would be able to exercise that power without knowledge of these five?'

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And I also asked him about the view of the religious scholars regarding knowledge of the Night of Power (*laylat al-qadr*), namely that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—had lost knowledge of it. For this reason he said: 'Seek it in the ninth [or] in the fifth!' If knowledge of it had remained with him, he'd have specified it for them—blessings and peace be upon him!

He exclaimed—God be pleased with him: 'For God's sake!' And he became angry. Then he said: 'By God, if the Night of Power arrived and I were dead—though my corpse were bloated and my leg raised the way the corpse of a donkey becomes bloated—I'd still

know the Night of Power even in a state like that! How could it be unknown to the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—?’

Then he related secrets involving divine insight about knowledge of the above-mentioned five things and knowledge of the Night of Power, as only a knower of God like himself could express. God give us success in relating some of them in this book! Indeed, he specified for us—God be pleased with him—the Night of Power in different years. One time he specified for us that it was in Rajab and in another year he specified it was in Sha<sup>‘</sup>bān, in another year in Ramaḍān and in another year during the night of celebrating the end of the Ramaḍān fast (*‘īd al-fiṭr*). He’d specify it for us before it arrived and order us not to reveal it. He’d say to us: ‘It (435) moves about.’ And in this way he’d specify for us the moment of Friday. Perhaps we’ll mention something from the secrets about this in the present book—if God is willing!

Let this be the last of what we wished to collect of the Qur<sup>’</sup>ānic verses which the Shaykh explained for us—God be pleased with him! There were other verses, some of which will be presented in their proper places in the course of this book. As for some of them, however, we didn’t comprehend what he meant and for this reason we haven’t recorded them. And there were some which contain secrets involving divine knowledge that mustn’t be written down. God make what we’ve written pure for His noble face and a cause of His complete satisfaction, and make whoever writes it down, or studies it, or strives after something in it, profit from it through the dignity of him who spoke these words—God be pleased with him—and give us profit through him—amen! And God include us among the people who love him in this world and in the world to come!

### CHAPTER THREE

[1] Pp. 520-27. The works of the 'dissolute' and the works of the 'deprived', i.e. those who worship out of habit and those who worship solely for their own benefit. But Qur'ānic verses and *ḥadīths* explicitly promise rewards? Obedience must be with sincerity and not for reward.

[2] Pp. 528-31. Does the Prophet acquire profit from our invoking blessings on him? The deceptive sweetness experienced by someone who has the wrong attitude when invoking blessings on the Prophet.

[3] Pp. 531-42. Why do people seek help from the godly rather than from God? Members of the Dīwān have brought this about. Twenty causes of being cut off from God, as well as things which increase one's faith (pp. 533-37).

[4] Pp. 542-47. Nature of mortal sins and the *ḥadīths* that deal with them. Means of livelihood are on the level of begging bowls. Those who delight in planning. Four categories of people (pp. 545-47).

[5] Pp. 547-49. On the body sometimes becoming disturbed and crying out. The spirit contains three hundred and sixty-six secrets. Prayers of the heart and prayers of the body. Satans may penetrate the heart and disorient someone's 'recollection' of God, causing him to cry out. The blind man who saw Satan during the *dhikr* performance of certain *fuqarā'*.

[6] Pp. 549-51. Tobacco forbidden because it harms the body. Odors that drive away the angels. But onions and garlic aren't forbidden and contrain benefit for man.

[7] Pp. 551-52. Why it's forbidden to enter a bathhouse where naked people don't cover themselves. Satans inhabit the place because of its darkness and can corrupt a virtuous man who enters the premises.

[8] Pp. 552-53. Believers are familiar with Hell. Others mention the word but are then forgetful of it due to the effects of the blood and its vapors.

[9] P. 553. Why does forgetfulness disappear from the body if it hears 'recollection'?

[10] Pp. 553-56. The nature of unveiling (*kashf*) and the fault that arises from it. The story of the Christian monk who turned his back on the cross. People of mercy and people of God's vengeance. The

case of the dispossessed Friend of God who displayed miraculous powers in the area of medicine.

[11] Pp. 556-58. Major ritual impurity in the view of the Friends of God. The perfect Friend is capable of making a person reach God in one instant. But this depends on the death of the carnal soul (self). Then all one's actions are purely for the sake of God.

[12] P. 559. Playing checkers is forbidden along with all things that cut one off from God. Views are divided about the game of chess.

[13] Pp. 559-62. Loving all believers without distinction causes repentance to become established in the bondsman's body. It removes from the heart one of the greatest causes of sin: envy. Don't hate the sinner but only his sinful actions. Those who stand out because of their mount, clothes, food or their house are shameless because they distract people from God.

[14] Pp. 562-69. The proper attitude when giving alms. Hypocrisy to be avoided at all cost. The story about the fool who wouldn't accept as alms a garment that wasn't given solely for the sake of God. The devoted worshipper who relied on his worship instead of God's generosity and went to Hell. Even in the Makhzan there are people whose heart is attached to God. The reason for instituting the religious prescriptions. The remedy for death.

[15] Pp. 569-76. The story of al-Dabbāgh and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr miraculously transporting themselves to an island in the Atlantic where they met a pious recluse. Al-Dabbāgh concludes that there are important benefits due to living among Muslims. What Sayyidī al-Hawwārī perceived when he gazed into the interiors of people as they came forth from one of the city gates of Fez.

### (441) CHAPTER THREE

On the darkness that enters the bodies and works of the bondsmen without their knowing it.

[1]

I heard al-Dabbāgh say—God be pleased with him: 'My shaykh, Sayyidī ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī, one day sent me to a garden (ʿarṣa) he owned to supervise the labor of people he hired to work there. He charged me to watch over their work and emphasized that I do this [attentively]. When it was time for the noon-day prayers, he joined us and accompanied us. He then remained there with us until the workers finished their work and he paid them their

wages. When they left, I looked at him and behold, he was upset! His face showed signs of anger so that I was afraid of him. He said to me: "Did you see something today?" I replied: "I didn't see anything. What thing?" He said: "Consider! Maybe you saw something." I replied: "I didn't see anything." Then he said: "What did you see regarding the work of the workers?" I replied: "While you were absent—before you joined us—they were doing their work with very little effort but once you arrived and they saw you, they began to work beyond their ability." He said to me: "Today you beheld the works of the dissolute and the works of the deprived."

As for the dissolute, when they worship, their acts of devotion and obedience emerge from their bodies without intention and purpose. It's no more than a habit of their body. What they do and omit to do when worshipping is out of habit and in accordance with their natural disposition, and not because of any purpose. Indeed, they have no purpose, neither righteous nor sinful. Their devotion isn't for God or for anything other than God. Their devotion is purely due to habit and natural disposition. It's like someone who's sated with food and drink. He doesn't want any food. He has no appetite for it and his body can't support it. Then he's present at a festivity with people. Now they set about eating and the man in question sets about accompanying them. But they set themselves in motion because of the food and the benefit to themselves, whereas he doesn't accompany them because of the food. He has no desire for food. In fact it's assumed he can't support it. Nor does he act for the sake of helping (442) his brethren, the believers, as this would be an upright intention. Rather what causes him to move is that when he sees the people set about [eating], his body starts to move due to its nature and out of habit. Such are the works of the dissolute.

As for the deprived, they're those whose works are for their own benefit and to attain their own goals. They aren't for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious! Works like this only increase [a person's] distance from God—He is mighty and glorious—because they're in opposition to the secret of the body's reality. The secret of the body's reality is that it's a body created by God, fashioned by Him, owned by Him, and not attributed in any possible way to anyone but Him. So if the body's actions occurred in accordance with this secret, they'd all belong purely to God. It's as if the person says: "I don't have any part in the body's actions. They're all created by God." Thus, when the works come forth, they emerge from him in accordance with the secret of the body's reality.

Now if he says: “My body belongs to God but its actions belong to me”, the intention behind his actions is for his own sake and for the sake of attaining his own goals. Here his action doesn’t take place in accordance with the secret of his body’s reality. It will never be possible for him to fulfill any of the rightful claims of God because he’s acting for his own purpose, not in order to undertake God’s right. Therefore, in his actions he’s cut off from God, and the gift from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—is cut off from him. He now becomes one of the deprived.’

I said: ‘Numerous Qur’ānic verses and countless *ḥadīths* have arrived that give encouragement by mentioning reward and abundant recompense for whoever undertakes action. But if it’s as Sayyidī ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī says, none of them would have mentioned this since it entails being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious!’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘What’s in the Qur’ānic verses and the *ḥadīths* hasn’t come to us because God said: “Do works for yourselves and I’ll reward you with abundant gifts for your works [done] in this state.” Rather He said: “Worship Me and be sincere toward Me in your obedience, and I’ll reward you.” And our intention in our actions is on behalf of God—He is mighty and glorious—and on behalf of His awesomeness and His majesty. When He confers on us great gifts, He rewards us for our actions—He is mighty and glorious—out of His generosity and grace. Verily, what’s in the Qur’ānic verses and the *ḥadīths* comes to us because if obedience is with sincerity devoid of recompense and without the bondsman seeking reward, then what you’ve mentioned occurs. How wicked and ignorant the bondsman is if he thinks he accumulates good deeds and earns reward by his actions! For he knows that as far as his actions are concerned, he hasn’t acquired so much as a hair through them. So if the body was created by God and actions were created by God, how with regard to good deeds are we permitted to rely on our actions created by Him—(443) He is mighty and glorious—and not to rely purely on His generosity and His mercy? But unawareness of God renders [our faculty] of deeper vision (*baṣā’ir*) blind. God protect us from this!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘There was a certain devoted worshipper (*‘ābid*) who worshipped God for his own personal benefit and so that God would give him what he wanted. He continued like this for twenty years and was obstinate in his demand. But then nothing he sought after was granted to him and he was perplexed by his situation. He said: “How can this be? For twenty

years I've been asking God for something and He hasn't given me anything and hasn't shown me mercy in this regard." Then God—He is mighty and glorious—conferred mercy on him and that very instant provided him with knowledge of his carnal soul and its actions. The worshipper exclaimed: "What a fool I am! After all, if God—He is sublime—created the body and its actions, created health in me, created the place in which I worship Him, created the water I perform my ritual ablutions with, created the garment I cover myself with and created the time during which I worship Him—what have I done in order to demand from Him a recompense for it and to deserve [His] attention because of it? No by God, I haven't done anything! But I've relied on God's actions in me and I've separated them from Him. Then I attributed them to myself and on the basis of them began to make demands on Him and to ask Him for wishes. Finally, I said: 'I've stood before His gate for twenty years and He's bestowed nothing on me.' Oh Lord, I turn to You in repentance! Oh Lord, I turn to You in repentance! Oh Lord, I turn to You in repentance!" When he turned to God in repentance and God the Sublime recognized his true repentance, God—He is exalted—showed him mercy and bestowed on him everything he wished including knowledge of Himself, which neither Paradise nor anything else can equal.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that something similar to this story is reported by the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī in *al-Budūr al-sāfira* in the chapter: 'He Who Has His Reckoning Examined Will Perish (*Man nūqisha'l-ḥisāb halaka*)'.<sup>1</sup> There he relates a *ḥadīth* from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who said: 'Among those who lived before you was a man who worshipped God the Sublime for six hundred years on an island in the sea. On the island God bestowed on him a sweet-water spring and caused a pomegranate-tree to grow which every day bore a pomegranate for him. This he ate and it was sufficient nourishment for him. And so he went on worshipping his Lord for the said amount of time, nor did he succumb to listlessness or slackening. When he died, his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—said to him: "Enter Paradise through My mercy and My generosity!" The man replied: "Oh my Lord, rather through my work and my worshipping You for six hundred years!" God the Sublime then went over the reckoning with him in detail. God—He is mighty and glorious—said to him: "Your worship for that period of time isn't adequate thanks for [even] one of the favors

<sup>1</sup> See p. 511, fn. 194; *Budūr*, pp. 305 f., no. 882, with a somewhat different wording.



I bestowed on you from among My favors. I caused a sweet-water spring to arise for you in the middle of the salty sea. By what stratagem (444) could you have deserved this favor from Me? I caused a tree to grow for you which provided you with fruit every day but for others only bears fruit once a year. By what stratagem could you have deserved this? I lengthened your life this long length of time, whereas others besides you live less than this. I gave you strength to worship this amount of time, whereas others don't have strength to do so. I drove off Satan from you and protected you from him. How many people apart from you he's destroyed! I bestowed on you health during this long period and didn't bestow it on others. And I created your body when you were nothing. I created all your movements and your states of repose, and I brought my favor to fulfilment for you. —Take him off to Hell!" The angels then set out with him for Hell.

When he saw that he was destroyed, he exclaimed: "Oh my Lord, have me enter Paradise through Your mercy and Your generosity." God the Sublime said—and He's the most merciful of the merciful and the most generous among the generous: "Bring him back and have him enter Paradise through My mercy!" And God the Sublime said: "Enter Paradise through My mercy. How great a bondsman you were to Me!"

This is what the *ḥadīth* says, and I've known it for quite some time.

.....

Then I asked our Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'What's worse, the worship of the dissolute or the worship of the deprived?'

He replied: 'The worship of the deprived is preferable and better for one particular reason, which is because God the Sublime is kind, merciful and benevolent. If He sees that the bondsman perseveres in his worship in order to attain his goals, He has mercy on him through His generosity and informs him of the reality of the situation concerning his body and his actions so that he comes back to God in repentance and turns toward Him—He is sublime—in his worship, as happened with the devoted worshipper for twenty years and countless human beings.'

And I said: 'Out of His mercifulness and His kindness He bestows on them the recompenses that are in the *ḥadīths* and Qur'ānic verses. In the same way He had mercy on them and informed them of Himself, He has mercy on them and bestows recompense upon them.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘If what you mean is that He bestows the recompense on them when He bestows on them knowledge of the reality of the situation, then yes. But if what you mean is that He bestows the recompense on them while they’re cut off from Him and consider action comes from themselves and that they have a right to a recompense from God—this you must never believe!’

(445) Then I asked: ‘What about a man who hears in a *ḥadīth* that whoever does such-and-such will receive this and whoever abandons such-and-such will receive that, and he believes that he’s only set in motion through God the Sublime’s permission, and then upon hearing the *ḥadīth* he takes the initiative to obey what’s in it, as well as to acquire the recompense it contains?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘If the freedom of his sight and his aim focuses on fulfilling the command of his Lord and the intention of the recompense is secondary such that if no recompense were mentioned in the *ḥadīth* he’d still do it, then there’s no harm for him in this. But if the freedom of his sight and his aim focus on acquiring the recompense and the intention of obedience is secondary such that if there were no recompense he wouldn’t do it, this is what we’re speaking about and this is what we condemn because he’ll forfeit this world as well as the hereafter. If, on the other hand, the freedom of his sight and his aim are focused on both of these together, he’ll be given his recompense on condition that he sees with two truthful eyes.

The first eye sees the action and that it’s obedience and that such-and-such a recompense is promised for it, and the one performing the action needs no encouragement in order to obey.

The second eye sees that God the Sublime is his creator and the creator of the action, that God the Sublime has promised him a reward, and that God the Sublime acts out of generosity, being under no obligation to promise anything He’s promised, and that despite this He’s free to choose—if He wishes He shows mercy, and if He wishes He punishes. But when the bondsman hears his Master’s command, he obeys it and reckons on recompense and benefit from his Lord. Thus, if the bondsman looks at his Lord with this excellent, friendly look, then his considering the reward does him no harm and his Lord bestows the recompense on him and rewards him with an abundance of good things.’

Then I said: ‘The religious scholars disagree regarding this group. Al-Ghazzālī—God have mercy on him—maintains in the book

*Minhāj al-ʿābidīn*<sup>2</sup> that they don't receive a recompense and he places them in the category of associating partners [with God] in actions, and in his view this is equivalent to hypocrisy that nullifies action. Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī in the *Sirāj al-murīdīn*<sup>3</sup> and al-Qarāfī in *al-Qawāʿid wa'l-furūq*<sup>4</sup>—God have mercy on them both—maintain that this group does receive recompense for it and that such associating of partners [with God] causes no harm and isn't the equivalent of hypocrisy that nullifies action.'

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: 'Ibn al-ʿArabī and al-Qarāfī are correct. Moreover: "God won't let the recompense of him who does good works be lost" (18/30). And this person has done good works. (446) His work has a light when it comes forth from his body. And his upright intention and his looking at his Lord with the second eye have another light in addition to the light of the action. So how can he be deprived of the recompense? But more perfect than him is someone who didn't look at the recompense, and he belongs to the first group. More perfect than both of them together is someone who detaches himself from the action after its intention and is unaware of the action except when he begins it. At that moment he knows it's God Who's intended it—He is mighty and glorious! He's then absent from it in the vision (*mushāhada*) of his Creator—He is exalted—and his thought is occupied with God's greatness and His majesty—He is sublime! We beseech God to bestow this on us—through His grace and His generosity, His nobility and His goodness!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Now this vision imposes love of God the Sublime, and love of Him—He is exalted—imposes exclusive preoccupation with Him. Preoccupation with Him imposes [seeing] that the recompense is from Him, in accordance with what suits His rank—He is exalted—not in accordance with what suits the rank of the bondsman. Absence of the vision imposes forgetfulness of Him—He is exalted—and this imposes preoccupation with the body. Preoccupation with the body imposes that the recompense be in accordance with the rank of the bondsman, not in accordance with the rank of the Lord—He is exalted! That's why you may see two men both of whom invoke blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and a weak recompense comes forth for the one man, while for the other a recompense comes forth

2 'Ibrīziana', p. 144, XCVI; cf. *Minhāj*, pp. 25 f.

3 'Ibrīziana', p. 144, XCVII; died 543/1148.

4 'Ibrīziana', p. 144, XCVIII; died 684/1285.

which is beyond any description and calculation. The reason for this is what we've said.

Now the first man's invocation of blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—came forth in forgetfulness and with a heart filled with distractions and partitions. It was as if he pronounced it in the manner of a routine practice and a habit. So he was given a weak recompense.

The second man's invocation of blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was with love and veneration.

As for love, its cause is that in his heart he visualizes the Prophet's majesty and his greatness—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the fact that he's the cause of all that exists and every light is from his light, that he's a mercy conferred on mankind, and that he's a mercy for the first and the last [of mankind], and right guidance for all people—indeed this comes from him and is because of him. Consequently, he invokes blessings on him because of this awesome rank, not because of any other reason based on his body's benefit.

As for veneration, its cause is that he looks at this awesome rank, what it consists of, and what the qualities of its possessor must be, and he sees that all human beings are incapable of supporting any of its qualities because its realities have advanced in him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—to an extent that can't be described in thought, let alone be sustained in practice. Thus when the bondman's invocation of blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—comes forth, the recompense for it is in accordance with the Prophet's station—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and in accordance with the nobility of the Lord—He is exalted! For (447) the motive and the incentive for this invocation of blessings is purely because of that awesome rank. And the recompense for the invocation is in accordance with the rank that provides the incentive for it. The motive for the first invocation was the allotment of his carnal soul and the purpose of his body. Thus the recompense for it was in accordance with its motive: "And your Lord will not wrong anyone" (18/49).

This is the way the bondsman's action is between himself and his Lord. Thus if the motive for it is the Lord's greatness and His majesty and the loftiness of His glory, the recompense is in accordance with the Lord's greatness—He is exalted! But if the motive for it and the incentive to do it is solely the bondsman's purpose and what's based on his body, the recompense is in accordance with that. Peace!

[2]

Then I asked: 'But does the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—acquire profit or not from our invoking blessings on him? Now when it comes to this question, the religious scholars are in disagreement—God be pleased with them!'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'God the Sublime didn't prescribe this for us with the intention of benefiting His Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Rather God prescribed it for us with the intention of benefiting us in particular. It's like someone who possesses slaves. He sees a fertile piece of land that no other land can equal for agriculture. He then has mercy on his slaves. He bestows this land on them with the understanding that all the cultivation will be their job and they'll do it alone. He doesn't bestow it on them in the manner of a partnership. This is how it is with our invocation of blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and its recompense is entirely for us. If on some occasions the light of its recompense flares up and is united with his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—this is simply like something that returns to its origin, and nothing else. Now the recompenses established for the believers are all because of the faith found in the believers, and the faith in them comes from the Prophet's light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! So the recompenses established for us actually come from him—God's blessings and peace be upon him! There's no similitude for him among things perceived by the senses except the encompassing ocean along with the rains when they reach the ocean in torrents. The water of the rains in fact originates from the ocean. So when it returns to the ocean, one doesn't talk of it as increasing the ocean.'

And I said: 'There's a religious scholar who presents arguments to the effect that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—does benefit from blessings being invoked on him. He compares this to the benefit that the Prophet receives—God's blessings and peace be upon him—from servants and youths when he's in Paradise. Just as he benefits—God's blessings and peace be upon him—from delicacies and fruits brought to him in vessels, so he benefits from lights and recompenses brought to him in the letters of the invocation. In the hereafter the conveyance occurs by means of the hands that carry the vessels; but in this world it occurs by means of the mouths that convey the letters. He says: "His situation in the House of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—doesn't exceed his situation in Paradise so that the comparison can't be drawn."' "

(448) He said—God be pleased with him: ‘But where do these servants and youths come from? In fact, they’re from the Prophet’s light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Nay, even Paradise and everything in it is from his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! What this scholar says would be true if those servants were separate from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and if our faith were separate from him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! But such isn’t the case!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And who knows how the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is refreshed?’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘You see a man recite the *Dalā’il al-khayrāt*.<sup>5</sup> If he wishes to invoke blessings on the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—he pictures him in his thought and pictures the things desired for him, such as means (*wasīla*), the lofty degree (*al-daraja al-rafi‘a*), the praiseworthy station (*al-maqām al-mahmūd*), and other things that are mentioned in every invocation of blessings. And he pictures himself demanding these from God the Sublime and supposes in his thought that, because of his effort, God answers him and grants him this for His Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! It enters the imagination of the suppliant that the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—has obtained great benefit because of him. He rejoices and is delighted. He increases his recitation and takes his invocation of blessings to an extreme, raising his voice while doing so. He feels how his invocation comes forth from the arteries of his heart. Humility overwhelms him and great delicacy descends on him, and he thinks he’s in a state beyond which no higher state exists. In this imagining he’s greatly mistaken and he doesn’t attain anything from God the Sublime by means of this invocation of blessings on his part because his invocation is connected with what he imagined and what he pictured in his thought. His imagining is false and the false isn’t connected with the True—He is exalted! What’s united with the True (*al-Ḥaqq*)—He is exalted—is the truth (*al-ḥaqq*) as it really is, the way that if a person opens his eyes, he sees the truth as it really is. Everything that’s like that is connected with the True—He is exalted! Everything that a human being doesn’t see if he opens his eyes is false and the false isn’t connected with the True—He is exalted! Let someone who invokes blessings on the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—be on guard against this great affliction. But most people don’t understand it and they imagine that

<sup>5</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 144, XCIX; by al-Jazūlī; died 870/1465; and see here p. 748.

this delicacy and sweetness that's come over them is from God—He is exalted! Rather it's from Satan, so that he may drive them away from the True—He is exalted—and greatly increase their distance [from God] by means of it. The incentive should be love of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and veneration for him, not anything else. In that case the light of the invocation will flare up, as previously mentioned. On the other hand, if the incentive for it is the bondsman's benefit, he'll be veiled and his recompense will decrease, as previously stated. And the same is true if the incentive for it is the Prophet's benefit—God's blessings and peace be upon him—for in that case invoking blessings on him isn't connected with the True—He is exalted—and won't reach Him, as already mentioned. But God alone confers success!

(449) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Recompenses accompany works, lights accompany recompenses, and today in the here and now lights are joined with the body. If works are purely for the sake of God the Sublime and they occur in accordance with the secret of the body's reality—as previously described—then the recompenses of the lights shine upon the body and the body understands this. The body experiences humility, trembling, weeping and other things which that shining light brings about. Then the possessor of deeper vision (*baṣīra*) knows by means of that light that the work has been accepted and that its recompense comes to such-and-such an amount.

But most people imagine that recompenses are only known in the hereafter. This is the case with those who are veiled. As for someone who isn't veiled, this is disclosed to him and not hidden from him.'

He said: 'On the other hand, if the works are for the sake of something other than God the Sublime and they don't occur in accordance with the body's reality, then they're a hardship and a discomfort, and they receive no recompenses, and no light due to the latter shines on the body.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Let the one who does an action examine his heart when he acts. For every action—however small it is—there's a recompense, and a shining light accompanies its recompense which the body understands without a doubt. Now if the heart is filled with distractions and partitions when the action is done, let him know that God has deprived him of its recompense. That's why He filled his heart with distractions. But if the heart is devoid of distractions and concentrated on the True—He is exalted—then let him know that God the Sublime has granted him its recompense.'

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘You see the seeker (student) travel from country to country to acquire science (religious learning) with the intention of attaining status, influence, worldly possessions and other things that are false goals. And he persists in this intention for many years. But God the Sublime deprives him of the light of science and he never becomes one of those firmly established in science, because a person only attains the reality of science if he turns toward it with his interior. But the interior of this person is filled with his goals and his distractions. What’s set in motion for science on his part is only his exterior, and science is one of the secrets and the exterior can’t attain it. This is how it is with the recompenses of actions which aren’t purely for the sake of God the Sublime. The bondsman will never attain them because the recompenses are from among God the Sublime’s secrets, and the external without the interior can never attain the secrets. But God alone gives success!’

[3]

(450) And I asked him—God be pleased with him: ‘Why do people seek help by mentioning the godly (*al-ṣāliḥūn*) and not God—He is mighty and glorious—? When a person is keen in swearing an oath, you observe him say: “By Sayyidī So-and-so!”, i.e. someone like Sayyidī ‘Abd al-Qādir al-Jilānī or Sayyidī Abū Ya‘azzā<sup>6</sup> or Sayyidī Abū’l-‘Abbās al-Sabtī and others—God give us profit through them! And if he wishes to have someone swear an oath and for the oath to be serious for the person, he says: “Swear to me by Sayyidī So-and-so!” And if he’s afflicted by some loss and he wishes to implore like those who undertake to beg from the people, he invokes the name of Sayyidī So-and-so. In all this they’re cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious—and if it’s said to them: “Call upon God as your intermediary or swear oaths in His name” or something to that effect, these words make no impression on them. So what’s the reason for this?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Friends of God who are members of the *Dīwān* have brought this about on purpose because of the strength of the darkness in bodies and the great number of those cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious—whose bodies have become wicked. The Friends of God the Sublime want the bodies of those who recollect their Chief and Creator—He is exalted—to be pure because God the Sublime answers whoever supplicates Him if he fully concentrates his interior on Him at the

<sup>6</sup> Al-Munāwī, *Kaw*. II, pp. 210 f.



time of his prayer of supplication, and His answering is in one of two ways. Either He bestows on him what he asked for, or if He refuses him, He explains for him the secret of the divine decree (predestination) behind the refusal. The latter is only the case with the Friends of God and not with those who are far removed and veiled. For if the gloom-laden body were to turn toward God the Sublime with all its veins and all (451) its substances and it asked Him for something which He refused and He didn't inform it about the secret of the divine decree behind the refusal, it might well experience doubt concerning God the Sublime's existence and fall prey to something more calamitous and more bitter than not having its request fulfilled. It was actually a good thing that the members of the Dīwān made people's minds become attached to God's upright servants. Should they then experience doubt about whether the upright are Friends of God, this wouldn't cause the people any harm.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'An indication for you of the large number of people cut off from God and the great amount of darkness in their bodies is that you observe, for example, a person leave his house with twenty *mawzūnas* and he brings them to the tomb of one of the Friends of God the Sublime. He presents them to the Friend so that he'll accomplish his request for him. How many a poor man in need meets him along the way and asks him for a divine gift—on the path of God for the sake of God's face. He doesn't give him one dirhem, however, but proceeds to the Friend of God and places the money by his head. Now this is one of the ugliest things that occur. The reason for this is that the alms didn't come forth on behalf of God—He is mighty and glorious—and for His greatness and His glory, for His noble face and His awesome being. Had the alms been for this reason, their possessor would have paid them out to every person in need whom he met. But since the incentive for them and the motive for bestowing them was the intention of profit for himself and the fulfilment of his purposes and his allotments, he singled out one particular place for them because he imagined profit was attached to that place, whether it was or not.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'I've seen today what was bestowed upon the godly from the Bāb Tilimsān<sup>7</sup> to al-Sāqiya al-Ḥamrā'.<sup>8</sup> As for dinars, eighty dinars were given. As for sheep, there were three hundred and sixty sheep. And as for cattle, seventy-two bulls were given. All this was brought forth in one day for the godly.

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<sup>7</sup> Not in Le Tourneau, *Fès*.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

On the other hand, during this day not ten dirhems were brought forth for God the Sublime!

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is one from among the causes of separation from God—He is mighty and glorious—which occur in this religious community without most people being aware of them. They consist of three hundred and sixty-six causes, all of which bring about the bondsman’s separation from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious!’<sup>9</sup>

Then I asked: ‘Are some of these present in your mind at the moment?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Write [this] down!

The first is giving donations to the godly in the way just described, i.e. not for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious!

(452) The second is calling upon the godly as intermediaries with God—He is mighty and glorious—so that they fulfill one’s wish. The visitor to the tomb says: “I’ve come to you, oh Sayyidi So-and-so. By God’s glory, fulfill my wish for me!” The cause of separation from God is that the visitor to the tomb has distorted what’s required and reversed the matter. He should have invoked God—He is mighty and glorious—as an intermediary with His Friends and not the other way round.

The third is visiting [the graves of] the godly. Now there’s an obligation placed on the visitor such as the number of ritual prayers which it’s incumbent on him to perform. But he abandons the performance of these which is God’s right and contains the light of God and His secret—He is sublime—by means of which He has mercy on him. And he goes on a visit to the tomb of the godly man. It’s clear what separation from God and what darkness are in him!

The fourth is fear of the tyrant with regard to his life and his sustenance as well as other things. He says to himself: “I won’t disobey this tyrant because if I do, he’ll kill me or stop my sustenance”—or do other things that cause fear of him. But if he were convinced of God the Sublime’s presence with him and His power over him and over the tyrant, he’d realize that God alone is the agent and that neither the tyrant nor anyone else is His associate in any particular action. He’d then fear no one but God—He is exalted! The extent to which this view is strong in the bondsman indicates how close he is to his Lord—He is sublime! And the extent to which it’s slight or absent indicates his distance from God—He is mighty and glorious—and how much he’s cut off from Him.

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<sup>9</sup> From the opening words of section [3]: ‘And I asked him...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 236, l. -2 to p. 238, l. 4.

The fifth is hope in the tyrant. He draws near to him in order to obtain sustenance from him. Were he convinced that God the Sublime is the provider of sustenance, he wouldn't behave in this way.

The sixth is giving assistance to the infidels. He advises them as to their worldly interests by seeing a path for them, etc. This is one of the causes of being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious!

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that we've never seen anyone who gave sincere advice to a tyrant without suffering loss in the end. Here we recall the story of Sufyān al-Thawrī—God be pleased with him—and the person who wanted to wake up a guard for the ritual prayers. Sufyān said to him: 'Don't wake him. Leave him just now so we're rid of him and his wickedness for the time being.'<sup>10</sup>

[He continued:] 'The seventh is failure to give sincere advice to the Muslims. He sees what harms them but he doesn't order them to be on guard against it. And he sees what benefits them but he doesn't order them to prepare for it.'

The eighth is finding hardship and trouble in the pursuit of worldly goods more sweet than worshipping God—He is mighty and glorious! Let whoever perceives this in himself know that he's perpetrating one of the causes of separation from God.

(453) The ninth is pursuit of the world by means of something more despicable, more base and more contemptuous than the world itself. The pious forefathers—God be pleased with them—pursued the world by means of something higher and more noble than the world, such as holy war, trade, agriculture and other licit things. As for someone who pursues the world by means of falsehood, deceit, immorality and broken oaths, he pursues it by means of sins that are more base than it, i.e. than the world. Let whoever perceives this in himself turn to God in repentance—He is mighty and glorious! One only attains the world by means of something more noble than the world.

The tenth is that the bondsman's works and acts of devotion are done with the intention that God will have mercy on him because of them, and with the intention of profit for himself and attaining his goals and pleasures. They aren't done for the sake of God's noble face and His magnificent being. This cause has affected most people except those whom God—He is mighty and glorious—has shown mercy. God include us among the latter—through His grace and His generosity!

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<sup>10</sup> Unidentified story.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘If God hadn’t created Paradise and Hell, it would be clear who does and who doesn’t worship Him. The worship of whoever worshipped Him would be for the sake of His noble face. In that case the person who worshipped Him—He is exalted—would require knowledge of Him in its perfect form. But once people heard mention of Paradise and Hell, their purposes scattered in the direction of the one or the other and they strayed from the path.’

[He continued:] ‘The eleventh is the sins committed in God’s sacrosanct places such as in mosques and similar places. But if the bondsman were really serious about assigning a house to his Lord and declared in his heart: “This is the house of God”, he wouldn’t then commit a sin there.

The twelfth is sodomy,<sup>11</sup> the wickedness of which will be discussed later—if God is willing—and there’s no wickedness that exceeds this.

The thirteenth is a man beating his wife when she’s committed no sin. Beating her like this is a cause of being cut off from God because of the duties the man has toward her.

The fourteenth is putting one’s family and relatives under obligation by spending money and saying: “I’ve spent this and that amount on you”, for the sake of putting [them] under obligation.

(454) The fifteenth is envy. The wicked deeds it entails will be discussed later—if God is willing—as well as the fact that most sins originate from it.<sup>12</sup>

The sixteenth is engaging in sin in full knowledge of it. And this will be explained later—if God is willing—when those who’ll be most severely punished on the Resurrection are discussed.<sup>13</sup>

The seventeenth is gathering worldly wealth from what’s forbidden.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that it’s clear this isn’t repeating what occurs in the ninth category.<sup>14</sup>

‘The eighteenth is disobeying one’s parents.’

And I heard al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—give an account about his shaykh, Sayyidī ‘Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī. He said he was seated with Sayyidī ‘Umar by the consecrated lote-tree which is outside the shrine of Sayyidī ‘Alī b.

<sup>11</sup> From: ‘Then I asked: “Are some of these present in your mind?”’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 238, l. 4 to p. 239, l. -7.

<sup>12</sup> From: ‘The thirteenth...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 240, ll. 21-33.

<sup>13</sup> From: ‘The sixteenth...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 241, ll. -2 f.

<sup>14</sup> From: ‘The seventeenth ...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 242, ll. 8 f.

Ḥirzihim. His son came to him to bid him farewell since he intended to set out on the pilgrimage to Mecca. But his father Sayyidī °Umar forbade him to do so. Al-Dabbāgh said: 'He disobeyed his father. He set out and his father was displeased with him. Sayyidī °Umar then said to me: "Four things result if someone disobeys his parents:

The first is that the world abandons him and loathes him, the way the believer loathes Hell.

The second is that if he sits down in a particular place and begins to speak with those present about one thing or another, God directs their hearts away from listening to what he says. God the Sublime removes the blessing and the light from his speech and he becomes detested among them.

The third is that the Friends of God the Sublime, those who are members of the Dīwān and possess the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*), will never look upon him with a look of mercy and will never take pity on him.

The fourth is that the light of his faith will continue to decrease little by little. If God wishes someone's wretchedness (damnation)—God watch over us—matters proceed like this until the light of his faith fades and disappears entirely. And so he dies an infidel—we beseech God for protection from this! If God hasn't wished this for someone, he dies with diminished faith—God protect us from such an eventuality!"

(455) And Sayyidī °Umar said: "If someone's parents are pleased, four things result which are the opposite of what preceded. The world loves him, the way the believer loves Paradise. And his speech is pleasant among the people, the Friends of God the Sublime have sympathy for him, and his faith continues to grow little by little. But God alone gives success!

So look, my brother, at these four evils contained in disobedience to one's parents, and at the four advantages contained in honoring one's parents!"<sup>15</sup>

[He continued:] 'The nineteenth is mixing with people who are veiled, such as those endowed with leadership. Now in the body of a believing bondsman there's a thread of light that emerges through an aperture in the body. This light is connected with the gift of God—He is exalted! It increases if he associates with Friends of God the Sublime, and it becomes less if he doesn't do so. But it's to be feared that he'll be cut off from the light completely and that the aperture will become blocked if he associates with those possessing

<sup>15</sup> From: 'The eighteenth...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 242, ll. 8 to -3.

leadership. The latter overpower his body with their leadership, their goods and their high rank. His body is their prisoner and subject to their power. He goes on listening to them with his heart and his bodily frame, and remains like this for a long time. God the Sublime doesn't occur in his thought and in his mind. Indeed, he continues like this, abandoning himself to his own purposes and his separation from God until the aperture becomes completely blocked. We seek refuge with God! This is an affliction that comes from those endowed with leadership. God afford us protection from it!<sup>16</sup>

The twentieth is differentiating between the four caliphs—God be pleased with them—i.e. Abū Bakr, °Umar, °Uthmān and °Alī—God be pleased with them one and all!

(456) He said—God be pleased with him: 'The meaning of differentiating is that you love one of them but you detest another one, as the Khārijites<sup>17</sup> and the Rāfiḍites do. Now differentiating this way is a cause of being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious—because each one of the caliphs inherited a particular quality from among the Prophet's qualities—God's blessings and peace be upon them—and loathing a caliph amounts to loathing the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! That's why it's a cause of being cut off from God.'<sup>18</sup>

And I asked him: 'Then what's the particular quality in Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him—?'

He replied: 'The quality of faith in God—He is mighty and glorious! Faith in God the Sublime on the part of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is of a special nature. If it were placed upon people of the earth, the Companions or anyone else, they'd dissolve. Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him—inherited a small amount of this characteristic in accordance with what his body could support. Yet no one in the Prophet's religious community—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is a match for Abū Bakr in this respect and no one even comes close to him—neither among the Companions, nor among others who've received the great illumination. For the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—attained secrets about divinity, higher truths about God's lordliness, and subtle points of divine knowledge (*°irfān*), to an extent that can't be described or supported, and he spoke to Abū Bakr about the oceans into which he delved—blessings and peace be upon him! Thus Abū Bakr ascended to the said place of ascent. Yet

<sup>16</sup> From: 'The nineteenth ...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 242, l. -3 to p. 243, l. 3.

<sup>17</sup> See EI s.n.

<sup>18</sup> From: 'The twentieth...' cited in *Rimāḥ* p. 243, ll. 3-5.

despite this, during his last three years the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't speak to him about these higher realities out of fear that Abū Bakr would dissolve.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for the particular quality that was in °Umar—God be pleased with him—it was the quality of giving good advice to the believers, looking after them and preferring them above himself, organizing the affairs of their armies (457) and whatever was of benefit to the common people and the elite among them. And this was a particular quality among the qualities of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—, and °Umar—God be pleased with him—inherited it to the extent that his body could support it.

As for the particular quality that was in °Uthmān—God be pleased with him—it was the quality of kindness, compassion and the bond of kinship, and this is one of the Prophet's particular qualities—God's blessings and peace be upon him! °Uthmān inherited it to the extent that he could support it.

As for the particular quality that was in °Alī—God be pleased with him—it was the quality of courage which was one of the Prophet's particular qualities—God's blessings and peace be upon him! °Alī—God be pleased with him—inherited it to the extent that he was able to support it.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And it's the same with all the Companions—God be pleased with them! Each one of them inherited something from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and hating a Companion, whatever Companion it might be, is a cause of being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious!'

Then we separated and I didn't hear the complete number of [causes] previously mentioned before he died—God be pleased with him! God disclose for us the full number by means of his blessing!<sup>19</sup> God be pleased with him!

(458) And I heard him—God be pleased with him—enumerate the things which increase faith. He said—God be pleased with him: '1) One of them is visiting graves. 2) Another one is giving alms purely for the sake of God—He is exalted! 3) Another is to be on guard against breaking oaths. 4) Another is averting the eyes from the indecent parts of the body and not looking at them. 5) Another is disregarding people's sins. If someone looks into people's sins and pursues these, God the Sublime may afflict him with doubt

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<sup>19</sup> From: 'And I asked him: "Then what's the particular quality..."' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 243, ll. 6 to -2.

concerning [the thought] that God the Sublime is graciously disposed to the sinner, doesn't cease showing him favor, and is generous in conferring gifts on him. The one who observes his disobedience says: "It's as if the person receives this favor because of his sin." Then Satan prompts him with regard to sin until he falls into sin or Satan prompts him in a different manner. He says: "Look how his Lord has shown him favor while he sins against Him. And you He refuses, though you obey Him. This isn't what wisdom demands!" And Satan presents him with other false doubts as well. God protect us from such an eventuality!<sup>20</sup> 6) Another one is reverence for the religious scholars (*'ulamā'*) who are the ones who bear the *sharī'a*—God be pleased with them! And revering them increases one's faith. God include us among those who recognize their worth!

He said—God be pleased with him: 'If the common people understood the worth of the religious scholars in God's eyes—He is mighty and glorious—they wouldn't allow them to walk upon the earth but the inhabitants of every neighborhood would take turns and carry on their shoulders the religious scholar who lived among them. But God the Sublime knows best!'

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Verily, God has forbidden sodomy (*luwāt*) because a number of angels fall with a man's semen, and if the semen enters the backside—which isn't the place for sowing—they all die.' And one time he said: 'They're like a pigeon's chick. If it falls from a high nest onto a rock, do you think anything will be left of it?'

He said: 'As for if the semen enters the vagina—which is the place for sowing—along with the semen there then remain two units of angels: the unit of angels of the father's semen and the unit of angels of the mother's semen. The total of this is three hundred and sixty-six angels, divided equally between them, except that the man has ten more because his angels are more numerous due to the secret behind Adam's being the origin of Eve.'

He said: 'Now if God the Sublime decrees that [a body] will be formed, the semen next becomes a clot of blood, then a lump of flesh and then the other stages that remain. Similarly, each one from the number of the angels grows just like the semen does, and when the child comes forth into the world, the angels accompany it. They're the guardians of its body. Their chief is the guardian (459) on the right. In the same way the child is formed between the father and the

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20 From: '...the things which increase faith...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 7, ll. 5-12.



mother, so these angels are formed between the angels of the father's body—[their total being] three hundred and sixty-six—and the angels of the mother's body.'

He said: 'But if God the Sublime decrees that there's to be no child from this semen, then the unit of angels comes down with it into the womb and they die there. No harm results for the bondsman because he has no share in this.'

He said: 'On this occasion the angels resemble drops of oil dripping from the wick of a lamp when it's been filled with more than its usual amount of oil. Thus they fall giving off light but by the time they reach the ground they're extinguished.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'For this reason it isn't permitted to cause the sperm to be extracted from the womb because we don't know whether God intends a child from the semen or not, and we would bring about the destruction of a great number of angels.'

As for the evil due to which fornication is forbidden, it isn't because of the angels but because of the severance of lineage. In fact, on the Day of Resurrection the people will have an immense benefit from kinship ties. But in the hereafter a claim of kinship is only accepted on the basis of testimony. That's why the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—ordered witnessing in marriage, as well as its announcement and public declaration. A fornicator only pursues his activity furtively because if he made it public, he'd be subjected to legal punishment. Thus he brings about the severance of lineage and its confusion.<sup>21</sup> This is what was referred to previously with regard to the evil of sodomy—God protect us from it!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Do you know which people will be most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection?'

I said to him: 'Tell me, oh Sayyidī.'

He replied: 'It's the man whom God has given a perfect body, perfect reason and perfect health, and has facilitated for him his livelihood and his means of sustenance but then for one or two days, or longer still, the man pays no attention to his Lord—He is exalted! And if it's possible for him to commit a sin, he commits it with his perfect body and his perfect reason, and he finds it pleasant and approves of it, without a thought about the Lord—He is exalted—causing him any disturbance. You see him attached to sin with the utmost attachment and cut off from his Lord—He is exalted—in

<sup>21</sup> From: 'And I heard him say....God has forbidden sodomy' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 239, l. -6 to p. 240, l. 20.

complete separation. He's entirely inclined to sin and he delights in it with the utmost delight. This person's recompense on the Day of Resurrection is that he's devoted to punishment with the whole of his nature and he wholly anticipates it with longing. He falls into it all at once and he finds it sweet, the way someone with mange finds scratching sweet. But the more he scratches, the greater is the harm to him.'

(460) He said—God be pleased with him: 'This is especially so in the case of a sin which is big and grave. If a believer commits a sin, he should know that he has a Master with power over him and he should experience fear and terror because of Him—He is exalted! This way the severity of the punishment will be lessened, even if he isn't entirely forgiven. But God alone confers success!'

Moreover, this was referred to previously in connection with committing a sin in full knowledge of it.

And I heard him recount a wondrous story—God be pleased with him—from Sayyidī ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī about visualizing the Creator during sin—He is exalted: 'A man who was excessive in indulging his carnal soul and a committer of sins came to my shaykh while I was present, and said to him: "Oh Sayyidī, I'm a committer of sins. I persist in this and I can't stop. What stratagem is there for [my] deliverance?" The shaykh replied to him: "Woe unto you! Do you sin against your Lord? Abandon sins and don't return to them again!" The man said: "I can't." The shaykh replied: "Woe unto you! Return to your Lord in repentance." He said: "I can't." The shaykh then ignored him, and the man resided with him for one or two days.

When he was about to take leave of the shaykh, the man said: "Oh Sayyidī, how can I find deliverance?" The shaykh replied to him: "When you're about to sin against your Lord, visualize three things. Then do as you wish. 1) Visualize the sin and its ugliness, as well as what it brings of God's wrath. 2) Visualize your body, your carnal soul and your baseness, and your turning away from your Lord. 3) Visualize your Lord and His force, His power, and His omnipotence over you when He has His sights on you. And then visualize His forgiveness of you and what a friendly curtain he's let hang down over you. Now when you've visualized these things the proper way, do what seems right to you."

He said: 'The man then departed and a while later I met him. He greeted me and said: "But don't you recognize me?" I said to him: "Who are you?" He replied: "I'm that sinner. And God took hold of my hand because of the blessing of the shaykh's words. Indeed, I

was about to commit a sin but I visualized the things the shaykh ordered me to visualize. I was then unable to sin and this was the cause of my return to God. But God knows best!”<sup>22</sup>

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘In my view a mortal sin (*kabīra*) is what you do when inwardly the heart is cut off from God the Sublime and from His angels, His books, His apostles and the Final Day, and even if a bondsman is attached to these things outwardly, it’s of no benefit to him.

(461) In this situation the sin is great because in the state of being cut off from God a bondsman falls into sin with his heart and his bodily frame, with his love and his inner core, with both hands and both feet, indeed with his whole person. No restraint from his heart restrains him and no reminder from his Lord reminds him.

And a venial sin (*ṣaghīra*) is what you do while the heart is attached to the Lord—He is exalted—and to the things which convey one to Him such as His apostles, His angels, and His books. If a bondsman then falls into sin, he falls into it unintentionally with an admixture of loathing for it because of the hindrances that are in his heart. When he falls into sin, he feels shame before his Lord—He is exalted!’

Then I said: ‘With this division [of sins] the Prophet’s enumeration of mortal sins in the *ḥadīth*—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—becomes difficult to understand despite their being designated. He didn’t restrict them to the state of being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious! In the *ḥadīth* of the two *Ṣaḥīḥs* the Prophet says—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “The mortal sins are polytheism, magic, disobedience to one’s parents, and killing a person.” Al-Bukhārī adds: “And a false oath.” And Muslim alters it to: “Telling a lie.” And in their two *ḥadīths* it also says: “Avoid the seven mortal sins: polytheism, magic, killing a person which God has forbidden except when it’s just, consuming the wealth of orphans, usury, running away in battle, and calumniating female believers who are chaste but inadvertent.”’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘These sins aren’t committed by a bondsman unless he’s cut off from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious! If his heart is attached to the Lord—He is exalted—he won’t undertake polytheism and practice magic or indeed any of the other things mentioned in these two *ḥadīths*.’

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<sup>22</sup> From: ‘And I heard him recount a wondrous story...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 244, ll. 17 to -2.

Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘But take a look at So-and-so. He’s going to be one of the Friends of God the Sublime. At the moment he’s a veiled person among the veiled. His heart is attached to God. Why is it he’s unable to commit any of these sins but fears them the way he fears Hell-fire? And then look at So-and-so. He isn’t one of those who’ve received illumination. His heart is cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious! Recollection purely with the tongue is of no use. Look at the shameful deeds he commits! We beseech God for protection from this—through His grace and His generosity!’

He said: ‘The sins of the people of estrangement (*ahl al-qaṭīʿa*) are clear and the sins of those who are connected [with God] (*ahl al-wuṣṣla*) are clear.’<sup>23</sup>

.....

(462) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘Means of livelihood such as agriculture, trade, etc., are on the level of begging bowls (*kashākil*) in the hands of beggars. It’s been God’s habitual practice—He is exalted—not to send down sustenance directly to the bondsman by giving him sustenance in his hand without some device, but He only gives it to him when the bondsman begs Him with one of the begging bowls of his means. So if he extends the begging bowl before Him, God, for his sake, will place in it what suits him and is of use for him. Therefore the one who makes use of a secondary cause must accord it its proper status, and his gaze when using it must be on his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—not on the means, just as someone undertaking begging looks at the people who give to him and doesn’t look at his begging bowl that’s in his hand. If when receiving means his gaze is on his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—he’s attached to his Lord on the occasion of the means, and his means is a connection between himself and his Lord—He is exalted! Moreover, he doesn’t rely on his means but on his Lord. If his reliance is on his Lord, he won’t engage in any means except what his Lord permits him. In this case there’s no difference for him between God bestowing means frequently or infrequently. Indeed, the Giver is one—He is exalted—and He’s capable of bestowing on him in a single means what He bestows on others through numerous means. Let him feel pious fear toward God and his seeking from Him be in a proper manner. This then is the description of the means of those attached to God—He is mighty and glorious!’

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<sup>23</sup> From: ‘And I heard him say...’, at the opening of this section, cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 244, l. -2 to p. 245, l. -8.

As for the others, they kill themselves on the occasion of the means through work. Any means they see they engage in, whether it's permitted or not permitted. They believe that sustenance comes in accordance with their stratagems and their idle management. These are the people who delight in planning worldly affairs and exhausting themselves in them, and in overcoming great hardships in pursuing them, instead of obeying God—He is mighty and glorious—and worshipping Him, because they're completely cut off from Him<sup>24</sup>—He is exalted!

Another time I heard him say on this subject—God be pleased with him: 'These people are like persons with ropes tied around their waists. They're then lowered from high mountain peaks so that they find themselves between the earth and the sky. They're left suspended in mid-air and this situation they're in drags on for a long time. Now the intelligent among them experience no repose and their carnal souls find no rest in anything else. In fact, their gaze is divided. Sometimes they look at the place where their feet will fall to see whether it's far or near and whether the spot is soft or hard, and to see what it will be like for them if they fall on that (463) spot. These views [are so frightening they] dissolve livers and the heart is shattered. Other times they look at the person who holds the rope to which they're attached to see whether he's about to release it from his hand or whether time still remains, and whether there's any affection and compassion between them and him. Will he feel pity toward them when he lets them drop and will he set them down gently in the place where they'll fall? Or is there no affection and pity between him and them, and is he unconcerned about how he'll cast them down? In this case they strive to gain his contentment. But this is impossible for them by any stratagem. They can only act, by God, with a submissive heart and a humble tongue, and the eye's gazing at him is the gaze of someone who fears him and seeks his sympathy. However, he has a free choice. If he wishes he can show mercy, or if he wishes he can inflict punishment. And their hearts burn out of fear for him and his punishment.

As for those among the suspended people who aren't intelligent, they don't look at the place where they're going to fall, and they don't look at the person with the rope in his hand. Rather they're submerged in forgetfulness. They think the place they find themselves in is a place of residence and they're busy with the means of residence. They build houses there and castles, and engage in

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<sup>24</sup> From: 'And I heard him say...', at the opening of this subsection, cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 245, l. -8 to p. 246, l. 3.

agriculture and trade, despite their [hanging] in mid-air. They have no awareness of the matter of the rope. If it's cut along with them, they find they've neglected the place they fall into since they never bothered to look at it. Nor have they taken the trouble to improve it, if only through supplication and beseeching. They're unprepared for falling into it and unprepared for the one who holds the rope. Indeed, they're unacquainted with him. And they certainly haven't beseeched him and sought rescue and protection from him.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Now this is the situation of someone who's negligent of God and the hereafter, and of someone who's mindful of both. The rope is a lifespan that's severed by death. The place into which a person falls is either Paradise or Hell, and the one who holds the rope is God the Sublime. Those who know Him are in continual fear of these two matters, and God the Sublime rewards them with repose on the day that they meet. As for the negligent, the opposite of this is the case.<sup>25</sup> But God the Sublime knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Verily, God has sent His apostles to the bondsmen and ordered the bondsmen to comply with one characteristic which is that they acknowledge Him and profess His oneness and don't associate anything as a partner with Him. When the bondsman attains this goal, he's then loved and cherished by God.'

.....

And what follows is also what he said—God be pleased with him: 'Obedience is opening a door through which (464) the light of truth enters bodies, and prohibiting sins consists of blocking the doors through which the darkness of falsehood enters a sinner's body. Thus whoever performs acts of worship and avoids offenses opens for his body the doors of truth's light and obstructs for himself the doors of the darkness of falsehood. And whoever abandons acts of worship and commits offenses, opens for his carnal soul the doors of the darkness of falsehood and obstructs for his carnal soul the doors of the light of truth. He who obeys and sins, doing both of these together, opens both doors together for his carnal soul. Let the bondsman consider which station he's in and which door he's opened for his carnal soul, before he comes to feel regret but regret is of no avail. Most people, however, think that outwardly performing acts of worship is sufficient to open the doors of truth, just as committing offenses in public is sufficient to open the doors of

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<sup>25</sup> From: 'Another time I heard him say on this subject...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 246, ll. 3 to -3.

wickedness. But it isn't like that. Rather in this matter the exterior must be in agreement with the interior. Consequently, people are in four categories:

1) There's the category in which a person's exterior and his interior are with God. His exterior is with God by obeying His commands, and his interior is with God by the absence of negligence when performing worship and by the occurrence of contemplation (*murāqaba*) and beholding (*mushāhada*). This is the person God loves—He is mighty and glorious!

2) And there's the category—God protect us from it—in which a person's exterior and his interior are with something other than God—He is exalted—and his exterior is engaged in offenses and his interior is filled with forms of negligence. This person is reprehensible.

3) And there's the category in which a person's exterior is with God and his interior is with something other than God. His exterior is engaged in acts of worship, while his interior is negligent. The reason why his worship doesn't restore him to his Lord is that it, i.e. his worship, has become a habit for him among his other habits. His body has become accustomed to it and he's come to do it by virtue of the restraint of his nature, not by virtue of the restraint of religious law. And another reason may perhaps be added, namely that he's known among the people for worship, asceticism and good behavior. Thus he's afraid that due to his slackness in his worship he may become lower in people's sight. So you see him engaged in worship through his day and his night out of desire for his rank to increase among the people. But the only result of his worship is the increase of his distance from God the Sublime. And God the Sublime may bring together a person from this category with one of His great Friends from the people of the first category. The Friend will then see the person's malady and want to cure him. He'll order him to stop performing some of (465) the external worship he performs. But the person refuses him this because of the deep-seatedness of the malady. So he perishes with those who perish.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is like what happened to the disciple of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī<sup>26</sup>—God be pleased with him! Abū Yazīd ordered one of those with him who was in this situation—but God the Sublime knows best—to abandon supererogatory fasting. But he disobeyed him. At that his companions and brethren in God said: 'Woe unto you! Would you disobey your spiritual model?' Abū

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<sup>26</sup> On Abū Yazīd see also p. 778.

Yazīd said to them: 'Abandon a person who's fallen in God's estimation—He is mighty and glorious!'

[He continued:] '4) And there's the category in which a person's exterior is with something other than God, while his interior is with God—He is exalted! So his exterior is engaged in offenses but his interior is in contemplation of God the Sublime. Thus you see him sin while his Lord is before his eyes and not absent from his thought. His disobedience is an intolerable burden on him. He feels it press down on him like a mountain. He's forever sad and dejected. In the eyes of God this category is better than the preceding one by many degrees, because what God wants from His bondsmen is contrition and that they stand before Him—He is exalted—in humility and submissiveness. And that occurs in this category but not in the previous one.'<sup>27</sup>

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that earlier al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—made use of the similitude of the worship of the hypocrites who act hypocritically before the people and only recollect God very little. Consult this in the explanation of the *ḥadīth al-iḥsān*: 'That you worship God as if you see Him.'<sup>28</sup>

[5]

And I heard al-Dabbāgh respond—God be pleased with him—when he was asked about the body's being disturbed at certain times and its crying out. The person who posed the question related that when he was engaged in recollecting God (*dhikr*) and worshipping, this would happen to him, and he was afraid it came from Satan—God curse him—and he noted that it would stop once he turned his attention to the world and occupied himself with it.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The spirit (*rūḥ*) may scatter the light it contains upon (466) the body. Then that disturbance affects the body. Sometimes it provides the body with light during worship, and sometimes it provides it with light during disobedience. While a person is disobeying his Lord and engaged in his lust, the spirit then scatters that light upon the body. Humility comes over the body and a return to God the Sublime.' He said: 'Moreover, a person who experiences this during worship shouldn't attribute it to his obedience and worship, lest pride enter into him. He should say: "If this were from obedience, it wouldn't occur under any other circumstances."'

<sup>27</sup> From: 'And I heard him say...God has sent His apostles', in the paragraph just above this subsection, cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 246, l. -2 to p. 247, l. -2.

<sup>28</sup> See p. 363.



He said: 'This light that comes to the body from the spirit is like a bridle for the body. If it sees the body turn from the path and fears it will swerve, it appears to it, i.e. to the body, in order to guide it to the path. This is only found in someone whom God wishes well since it's one of the means of guidance. In another body that God doesn't wish well there may be darkness that leads the body from the path and stops it from complying with the Apostle—God's blessing and peace be upon him!' He said: 'And every body has a glow and only walks in its own glow. If its glow guides it to the path, it's been given success. If its glow causes it to swerve—and that's what we call darkness—then it's forsaken. God protect us from this!'

Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'Within the spirit there are three hundred and sixty-six secrets. Among them is a secret which if the spirit provides the body with it, the body weeps continually. And among them is a secret which if the spirit provides the body with it, the body laughs continually. And among them is a secret which if the spirit provides the body with it, the body cries out continually. But the spirit only provides the body with what's been preordained.'

And one day I was with al-Dabbāgh in a place—God be pleased with him—and a man sat down with us. While the Shaykh was speaking—God be pleased with him—the man suddenly began to let out abominable cries. He went on in this way for a long time. Afterwards the Shaykh said to me—God be pleased with him: 'This is a serious matter. Would that the satans weren't playing about with him and corrupting his prayers for him!'

I said: 'Oh Sayyidī, how is this?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The orientation of hearts toward God the Sublime constitutes the prayers of hearts, just as the body's inclination and its prostration are the prayers of the body. Indeed, ritual prayer and all acts of worship were prescribed by the law so that this orientation would occur. It's the result of acts of worship and the benefit from them which is a cause of profit and (457) mercy for the bondsman. Now if the satans see a person who wishes to obtain this orientation through recollection of God (*dhikr*) or listening to fine words or other such things, they penetrate to his heart and corrupt his orientation for him—out of jealousy toward the offspring of Adam and loathing for them. Thus this "crier out" is afflicted by evils. Among these is the corruption of the orientation which is a cause of his profit. Another is that he thinks he's something important. And another is being cut off, which one fears for him because due to that crying out he thinks he's something

important, just as the people think he's something important and point him out. But woe unto whomever fingers are pointed at.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what supports this is the story that the shaykh Zarrūq<sup>29</sup> recounted—God be pleased with him! In summarized form it goes: 'There was a group of *fuqarā'* who had a nighttime retreat in Fez. They talked an upright person into coming with them, and he was blind. So he went with them to the place. Then while they were performing the recollection of God (*dhikr*), suddenly the blind shaykh said—God be pleased with him: "Oh people, Satan has entered among you in the form of a goat with horns." And he said: "Who among you is the owner of the red headcloth? Verily, I see Satan sniffing him vigorously." The blind man then let out a cry and said: "He's butted him with his horns and the horns have penetrated him." He'd scarcely said this when the owner of the headcloth let out a cry and lost consciousness. Then the blind man said: "And who among you is the owner of such-and-such an item of clothing? I've seen Satan go over to him and sniff him." He then cried out: "By God, he's butted him an abominable butting with his horn." And the person who'd been sniffed let out a cry and lost consciousness.' Take a look at the whole story. They were exposed by this upright man's presence with them. Up till then they'd thought they were involved in something important but they were involved in compound ignorance.

It happened that a certain person let out a cry in the presence of a shaykh who was a knower of God (*ʿārif*). The shaykh then said to him: 'I followed your cry until it entered a grave in the such-and-such cemetery.' The one who'd cried out—and he wasn't one of this shaykh's disciples—replied: 'You're right, oh Sayyidī. When I passed by you and found you [all] recollecting your beloved [performing the *dhikr*], I recollected my sweetheart. She was my cousin and has died. That's her grave. When I thought of her, I cried out due to the pain of separation.' But God the Sublime knows best!

[6]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Tobacco—known as *ṭāba*—is forbidden because it does harm to the body and because the passion of those attached to it distracts them from worshipping God and cuts them off from Him.<sup>30</sup> Whenever we're in doubt about whether something is forbidden (*ḥarām*) or permitted (*ḥalāl*) and we don't find a text from the Prophet that deals with it—

<sup>29</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 144, C; on him see here p. 614, fn. 2.

<sup>30</sup> On tobacco cf. Radtke, *Autochthone*, pp. 10-12; Berger, 'Tabaksrauch', pp. 250 ff.

(468) God's blessings and peace be upon him—we look to the people of the Dīwān among the Friends of God the Sublime. They're "the people of the circle and the number".<sup>31</sup> If we find that they engage in this matter, we know it's permitted. If we find that they don't engage in it but avoid it, we know it's forbidden. If some of them engage in it and others don't, we look to the majority, for the truth is with the majority. Now the people of the Dīwān aren't engaged with this tobacco. And [it's forbidden] because the angels suffer harm from its odor.'

Then he told us a story about a city that reeked with the stench of human excrement and the dung of riding animals. And it had a shortage of water to deal with this. He gave a lengthy description of the city and the particulars of its appearance and its location. But our purpose is attained with what we've said. So we've omitted to record the details of his description. He said: 'Abominable odors gathered together in the city, beyond what one can imagine.' He went on: 'Then one day eight Friends of God the Sublime from among those who possess the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) entered the city. When they reached its center, however, they left in great haste. The cause of their haste was that the angels of their bodies fled the abominable odors. The Friends of God then fled as well because only a person with deeper vision (*baṣīra*) knows the danger of the angels fleeing the body. The one thing comparable to this would be to take someone to an enemy's place and the country of bandits and to strip him of his weapons. What could he then face the enemy with?'

Then I said to him: 'Garlic and onions and things like that have a bad odor but it isn't forbidden to eat them.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'If a human being's right and the right of an angel contradict one another, the human being's right has precedence. This is because all things have been created for the sake of Adam's offspring. Whatever contains a benefit for Adam's offspring isn't forbidden, even if it contains harm for an angel. And the benefits of garlic and onions are obvious, by contrast with tobacco. Tobacco contains no benefit. Indeed, smoking it causes harm to the body. And eventually tobacco comes to subjugate the body. It's like someone who tears and patches. If the person attached to tobacco didn't smoke it, he wouldn't suffer a tear so that

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<sup>31</sup> *ahl al-dā'ira wa-l-'adad*: the members of the Dīwān al-ṣāliḥīn, the Council of the godly. See description of the circles and rows they're arranged in at the beginning of Chapter Four.

he needed to sew on a patch. Those who use it think it contains a benefit. But there's nothing in it beyond this.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I heard someone who'd been afflicted by tobacco say the same thing. Indeed, he heard it from a skilled Christian physician.

[7]

As for what he said—God be pleased with him—regarding the danger of angels fleeing the body, this is how (469) he answered me another time when I put questions to him. We were debating the views of the shaykh al-Ḥaṭṭāb<sup>32</sup> and the shaykh al-Mawwāq<sup>33</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on them—about entering a bathhouse with naked people who don't cover themselves. The shaykh al-Ḥaṭṭāb says: 'It's forbidden to enter. And a person must perform ritual ablutions with sand if he's afraid of [using] cold water.' The shaykh al-Mawwāq says: 'Let him enter. And let him cover himself and lower his eyes. Then it isn't forbidden for him.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The shaykh al-Ḥaṭṭāb is right. As for what the shaykh al-Mawwāq says, it contains an evil, even supposing the one who covers himself is very cautious and avoids at all costs gazing at the private parts of others. The evil here is that the sins and the violation of God the Sublime's commands are accompanied by darkness. Between this darkness and the darkness of Hell there are threads and connections by means of which the wretchedness of Hell befalls him. No one knows this better than God the Sublime's angels. Thus if some group gathers under the roof of a bathhouse, for instance, for the purpose of sin and they all commit sin, darkness pervades that place. The angels then shun them. And if the angels shun them, Satan and his soldiers come and inhabit the place. The lights of their faith, i.e. the faith of the sinners, become like lamps assailed by violent winds from every side. Sometimes you see their light going in this direction, sometimes in that direction, and other times it's turned downwards so that you say it's gone out and disappeared. That's why "sins are the messenger of infidelity". God the Sublime protect us from this!

If the bathhouse and its people are as we described and if we suppose that a man who's virtuous, devout, eminent and cautious, comes and enters the premises while covering himself, the light of his faith will suffer a disturbance because of the darkness he finds in the bathhouse. For that darkness is the opposite of faith, and his angels are disturbed by this as well. The satans, on the other hand,

<sup>32</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 469; *A'lām* VII, p. 58; died 954/1547.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., I, p. 469; *A'lām* VII, p. 154; died 897/1492.

experience a hope in him. They join him and arouse in him lust for gazing at [people's] private parts and tempt him. He continues to struggle with them. But they're a match for him, and he's weak in their presence so that he finds delight in lust and takes pleasure in gazing at [people's] private parts. We beseech God to protect us from this!'<sup>34</sup>

(470) He said: 'Let's imagine a group who drink wine and take pleasure in it. They display the sins that accompany this and are shameless regarding them. They aren't wary of anyone and fear no one. Then let's imagine that a man comes to them with the *Dalā'il al-khayrāt* in his hand. He sits down among them and begins to recite from it. He's seated with them a long time and sits with them till the end of the day. All the while he's reciting and they engage in their sins. But not one day and a night elapses before the man comes over to them and becomes one of them due to the malady that we mentioned. For this reason it's forbidden to keep company with people of iniquity and sin because there's blood, lust and negligence within us and within them, except for someone God has shown mercy—and such persons are few.<sup>35</sup> But God the Sublime knows best!'

## [8]

I heard al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—describe Hell—God protect us from it! And he said things in his description of it that [minds] can't sustain so that one of our brethren [in God] who were present said: 'Oh Sayyidī, if people had knowledge of Hell, it would hold them back from food and drink, not to mention other things.'

Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'Those who believe in God and in His apostles are all familiar with Hell. If one of them recollects Hell with his tongue, that recollection passes through his heart just as it passed over his tongue. If he hears it mentioned, that hearing passes through his heart just as it passed through his ear. His exterior and interior are on the same level regarding his belief in Hell. It's present in his interior the same way it's present in his exterior. But what counts is to make that presence last. Whoever does make it last, God will show him mercy. His negligence will disappear and his violations will be few. But whoever doesn't make it last, the opposite of this will happen to him.'

I said to him: 'What causes this presence not to last?'

<sup>34</sup> From: 'We were debating the views of shaykh al-Haṭṭāb...' cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 7, l. 20 to last l., as well as in *Rimāh* II, p. 220, ll. 4 to -6.

<sup>35</sup> From: 'Let's imagine a group...' cited in *Rimāh* II, p. 220, ll. -6 to -2.

He replied: 'The blood that's in the body and its vapor. This is what causes it. Now when the bondsman recollects Hell or hears it mentioned, if the recollection descends into his heart—as described—then the blood and its vapor depart.'

I said: 'That's why the face of someone who's frightened turns pale. Then if the blood flees, its effect, which is forgetfulness, becomes suspended. If recollection—which is the cause of the blood's flight—stops, the blood comes back to its channels and forgetfulness overwhelms the body. If the bondsman returns to recollection, the blood calms (471) down and forgetfulness disappears. But if he neglects recollection, the blood comes back to its place and forgetfulness takes possession of the bondsman until he returns to recollection and forgetfulness disappears. This then repeats itself again. And so it continues except with a person whom God has shown mercy.'

People differ, however, with respect to the length of time between their returning to recollection and their neglecting it. Some return after an hour, others return after two hours. And there are those who return after one day and others who return after two days.

So consider, oh my brother, which category you belong to!

"My success is only through God. In Him I put my trust and to Him I return in repentance" (11/8).'

[9]

Then I said: 'Why does forgetfulness disappear from the body if it hears "recollection (*dhikr*)" and the blood flees from it, whereas if it doesn't hear it, the opposite is the case?'

He replied: 'Because if it hears recollection, wakefulness and awareness come over it and it's like someone who regains consciousness and his actions take place the appropriate way. But if hearing leaves the body, it returns to its sleep which is forgetfulness. In this case it's like a sleeping person who fell asleep agreeably and with pleasure. If he's spoken to and addressed, he answers the one speaking to him with reluctance and difficulty. As soon as the voice calling him ceases, he falls asleep again because sleep dominates him and precedes the call to his body. And so it is with forgetfulness. It has precedence with the body and dominates it. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[10]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about unveiling (*kashf*) and vision by means of it, as well as the cause of the fault that arises from it.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Unveiling, good fortune and other things like these are all caused by the heart being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious—and the interior’s desolation without His sway—He is exalted! If the bondsman introduces his Lord into his heart and realizes that God the Sublime does what He pleases (472) and commands what He wishes and that there’s no one who arranges matters but He and He has no partner in His dominion—He is mighty and glorious—and that God the Sublime is kind to His bondsmen giving them more than they desire and showing them mercy beyond what they imagine—in this case then the bondsman is content with his Lord as guardian and takes Him as a guide in all his affairs, relying on Him entirely and being devoted to Him in his innermost heart. He places his keys and all his reins in God’s hands and depends only on Him in all his affairs. Now he beholds good things his Lord and Master has done in him, things no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and that have never occurred in a human being’s heart. This is a matter of someone whose heart is filled with God—He is mighty and glorious!

As for someone whose heart is empty of his Lord—He is exalted—forgetfulness overwhelms him, he beholds nothing but his own body, and he only sees actions as issuing from himself. This is the person who engages in what was described earlier. He wishes to know about the Unseen in order to obtain more of the things that are good according to his darkened vision and unveiled sight. In this case, his Lord—He is exalted—gives him over to himself and brings about his destruction through his own arranging of matters (*tadbīr*). He afflicts him with heavy losses and calamities, disappointment and failure to reach the goal—which is what one observes among those endowed with this skill. We beseech God for protection—through His grace and His generosity!

And this is actually little when it comes to someone who turned away from his Lord and wasn’t content with what came forth as his lot (*qisma*).’

And he said: ‘Something very strange happened to one of the Christian monks. He was their leader and their overseer in the church. It was his practice when he left the church not to turn and present his back to the cross before he was outside the church. Matters continued like this until one time his son went on a voyage while the sea was in a state of agitation and upheaval. For his son’s sake he was filled with fear beyond description. He was on the lookout and awaited news about him until he was informed that his son had returned safely. Overcome with joy, he omitted his usual

practice when he left the church. He turned his back to the cross and went outside. Once he greeted his son, he remembered what he did regarding the cross and immediately went back. He told the monks: "Whip me a thousand times with the lash!" They asked: "Why?" He replied: "Because this day I turned my back to the cross." They took his turning his back [to the cross] very seriously and set about whipping him until they completed the [full] number. He was spared none of the ordeal. At this point the people thought that because of the hardship he underwent from the whipping, his attitude toward the cross had altered and he'd renounced his religion. But before they knew it, he took hold (473) of a large knife and severed his feet from his ankles, saying: "This is the reward for someone who turns away from his lord (*sayyid*)."

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'Now if this occurred on the part of a group engaged in error and falsehood, what should the state of someone be like who follows the truth and worships God the Sublime?' He said: 'But God—He is blessed and exalted—had already decided in His pre-eternal knowledge and His pre-eternal will to create groups whom He made into people of His mercy, and others whom He made into people of His vengeance. And He makes whatever they do and refrain from doing comply with what's been preordained.

As for the people of mercy, He's attached their hearts to Him and directed their striving toward Him—He is exalted! Whatever they do and refrain from doing accords with this. Their ritual prayers are for Him, their fasting is for Him, their rising is for Him and their sitting is for Him, their wakefulness is for Him and their love is for Him. And He continues to move them to do what pleases Him—He is exalted—until they reach Him and attain His mercy, and they receive the mercy that was preordained for them.

As for the people of His vengeance, He's attached their hearts to what's other than Himself and directed their concern to something more fragile than the spider's thread—like the previously mentioned things. Whatever they do and refrain from doing accords with this. Thus their rising is for something other than Him—He is exalted—so as not to become attached to Him—He is sublime! And their sitting is like this and their wakefulness is like this. All their effort is for something other than Him—He is exalted—until the previous threat is carried out and they attain the punishment that was preordained for them.'

And he told us a story about a godly man who said: 'I sat alongside two men of advanced age from morning to noon. They were around



seventy years old. They spoke about things of the world and there was no mention of God the Sublime on their tongues, nor of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!' He said: 'I then rose and renewed my ritual ablutions. Next I sat down alongside two youths who were keeping [a complete] fast or nearly so. And they spoke about God the Sublime's unicity and the attributes He possesses. I heard things from them that [the mind] can't sustain. I was amazed by their state and by the state of the two elderly shaykhs. "This is the preordaining of the All-powerful, the All-knowing" (36/38).'

Then he recounted a story for us—God be pleased with him—by way of confirming that if God the Sublime attaches a bondsman's heart to something other than Himself—(474) He is exalted—He has immense forbearance toward him and assists him with what's an infatuation for him so that he's even seen to give information about the invisible realm and other such things. It's a story that fills the heart with dread. It goes as follows:

'There was a Friend of God whom God dispossessed. The light of truth was cut off from his heart. Before being dispossessed he displayed the thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends but after being dispossessed he exhibited a capacity in matters to do with medicine which caused him amazement—as an infatuation for him—and made him think that after being dispossessed he was doing something important. Everywhere people heard about him and they came to visit him in groups with great sums of money which he gathered together. He went on in this way for a period of nearly thirteen years and amassed seventy thousand dinars. He then died without leaving an heir and the exchequer (*bayt al-māl*) inherited from him. The final outcome of his affair was loss. We beseech God for protection and well-being! But God the Sublime knows best!'

[11]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the Friend of God's awareness of major ritual impurity when it exists in a person who hasn't purified himself with ritual ablutions.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Major ritual impurity in the view of the Friends of God is of many kinds and ritual ablutions are obligatory for any one of them. The causes of impurity in the view of the Friends are multiple, whereas in the view of the religious scholars there's a sole cause. Thus according to the Friends, ritual ablutions are obligatory with regard to all those causes, whereas according to the religious scholars they're only obligatory because of a sole cause.'

Then I asked him about this matter for which there's only one cause according to the religious scholars but multiple causes according to the Friends of God.

He replied: 'It's the body's being cut off from God the Sublime in its vision, turning all of its eyes away from Him—He is exalted! Its veins become filled with joy and delight for something other than Him—He is exalted—and thought is enclosed in this "other", as are all the body's limbs and substances, in such a way that in this situation "the other" cuts it off from God—He is blessed and exalted! If the body then experiences this complete separation, the angels and the guardians take flight from it and consider the bondsman's being cut off from his Lord—He is exalted—as something very grave. And in the view of the Sufis every decisive (cutting) cause that results in the body's being cut off must be cleansed by major ritual ablutions. On the other hand, in the view of the religious scholars major ritual ablutions are only obligatory after sexual intercourse or what amounts to the same.'

He said: 'The secret behind major ritual ablutions is purifying the body of this form of being cut off, considering it, i.e. being cut off, on the level of tangible uncleanness. When the bondsman begins the ritual ablutions, the angels begin to return. Now the cause of the Friend of God's awareness of major ritual impurity is that he sees the angels taking flight from the cut-off body. For he knows that the cause of this flight is the state of being cut off which results from major ritual impurity.'

(475) And I said: 'If someone contemplates God the Sublime at the time of sexual intercourse does it mean—according to this explanation—that he isn't obliged to perform a major ritual ablution?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This would be a rare exception, and there's no rule for what's rare. But God the Sublime knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The Friend of God is capable of speaking to a person in his ear and before he gets up to go, that person and the Friend of God are on the same level regarding divine knowledge without any difference between them. That means that the perfect Friend of God is capable of making the bondsman reach God the Sublime during this instant.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'But the whole matter depends on the adhesive that the secret sticks to. For if there's no adhesive in the body, the secret will return to its origin. It's like someone who

dresses the air in a shirt, trousers and a turban. They won't remain fixed in the air.'

I wanted to question him about the adhesive but it wasn't possible on that occasion.

We separated toward evening and I went to sleep. But then I beheld him in a dream and I asked him about it. He replied to me: 'It's death of the carnal soul (the self).' When I met with him in a waking state, I informed him of the answer in the dream. He said—God be pleased with him: 'The answer is true.'

Then I asked: 'What does death of the carnal soul mean?'

He replied one time: 'It means all the bondsman's actions are purely for God. If works are for the sake of something other than God, it's a sign that the carnal soul is alive. Another indication is that if the bondsman experiences doubt from his carnal soul, this is a sign that the carnal soul is alive. The extent of the doubt depends on the amount of the carnal soul's life. Whoever has no doubt has no carnal soul, whereas whoever has doubt has a living carnal soul. And whoever has a living carnal soul, his works aren't for God the Sublime. Instead, he strives for the sake of his carnal soul and plans on its behalf.'

Then I asked: 'What's the antidote which, if applied to the carnal soul, will cause it to die and to dissolve the way salt dissolves in water? Tell us so we may apply the antidote to the carnal soul and be delivered from it.'

He replied: 'There's nothing except that the great mountain descend on it.'

I asked: 'What's the great mountain?'

He replied: 'Knowledge of God the Sublime and beholding Him. If (476) the bondsman's heart is filled with this, and he knows he's seen and heard by his Lord—He is exalted—and that he doesn't set about doing anything unless God moves him to do so—He is exalted—and that it's God Who confers on him whatever blessings He wishes—He is exalted—and that his destiny is to come before his Lord in the hereafter and He'll have him enter whichever house He wishes—if he thinks about this, he'll surely realize that he's unable to benefit himself or anyone else in this world or in the world to come unless his Lord bestows benefit upon him. It's at this moment that he desires nothing but God, and his carnal soul dies. God give us success with the causes of its death—through His grace and His generosity!'

[12]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the game called checkers (*al-dāma*).<sup>36</sup> We'd just passed some people playing the game and so I asked him for a judgement about playing checkers.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It's forbidden.'

I asked: 'Why is that?'

He replied: 'All forbidden things are forbidden for one reason only which is because of what they contain that cuts one off from God the Sublime. Everything which cuts the bondsman off from God the Sublime and which the Lawgiver (Muḥammad) saw no purpose in, God forbids.'

He said: 'And this game has only one use, namely to distract from God the Sublime. Indeed, you see that those who play it become absorbed in it heart and soul so that at that moment all the eyes of their bodies are obstructed from God the Sublime.'

I said: 'The same is true of learning to shoot, horse riding and other such instruments of war. They entail being cut off from God the Sublime when one is engaged in them.'

But he replied: 'These aren't like the game just mentioned. Indeed, the Lawgiver saw no purpose in it and it doesn't bring the bondsman any benefit to his body, by contrast to shooting, horse riding and other such instruments of war. Learning the latter is part of preparing one's strength as commanded in God the Sublime's words: "And prepare for them whatever strength and strings of horses you can" (8/60). And everything desired by the Lawgiver or suitable for him to desire doesn't cut one off from God the Sublime.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'That's why they disagree about chess. Some permit it in view of what it contains with regard to learning the nature of war and in view of other things it contains. So it's suitable to be desired by the Lawgiver. But some reject it, considering that the Lawgiver's desire with regard to learning the nature of war and other things isn't especially based on this method, but is achieved in another way which is clearer and easier than this. That's why chess is "lighter" than checkers. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[13]

(477) And I heard him relate—God be pleased with him—from one of the godly men that what causes repentance to become established in the bondsman's body and to spread its branches and

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<sup>36</sup> *dāma*: not mentioned in Rosenthal, *Gambling*. The entry in Dozy refers to Lane: cf. *The Modern Egyptians*, London, 1895, p. 355, where *dāma* is merely mentioned as 'draughts'.

firmly plant its roots there and reach the utmost degree, is [the bondsman's] love of all believers without distinction, just as he hates all infidels without distinction. He said: 'If this love is in the bondsman, repentance will descend upon him from God. Even if he disliked it and wished to reject it, it would still descend without any doubt. The reason for this is that the bondsman only distinguishes in his love of the believers, so as to feel love for one but not another, because of the spiteful scheming in his heart that arises from envy or pride or suchlike. Thus his interior thoughts are wicked. Sincere repentance, however, will only descend on good soil and good interior thoughts. If he loves every one of the believers, all machinations will disappear from his heart and repentance will descend on him.'

And one time he said: 'Such a person has no need of repentance. This general love is sufficient to eradicate all sins. It removes from the heart all the machinations that cause sins.'

He said: 'One of the greatest of these machinations is envy but it can definitely not continue with this love. In fact, we say envy is the greatest of machinations because all sins and machinations branch out from it. Envy is the cause of them all. You only hate someone for having more wealth than you or more children and such things because of your envy of him. Similarly, you're only overbearing toward him when you have more wealth and children than him and are more powerful in retainers, because you want to stop him from attaining your rank. This arises from the pride that makes you overbearing toward him. And this is simply because you don't want him to possess that rank. Here is envy in its very essence. Such is the view that attributes all sins to envy.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that the calamity of envy was mentioned earlier<sup>37</sup> and that it's one of the doors of darkness. There we referred to the present words. God the Sublime protect us from the evil of our carnal souls (selves) and from the evil of every person endowed with evil!

Then I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'If this man loves all the believers without distinction, where is love in God and hate in God, both of which are one of the branches of the faith? Indeed, the sinner deserves to be hated in God. For if we loved him in God, we'd be contravening what his disobedience requires.'

(478) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'With regard to the sinner, one must direct one's hate against his actions, not against his

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<sup>37</sup> See p. 535.

believing body, his pure heart and his constant faith. The things which impose love of him are “necessary”, whereas the sins which impose hate for him are “accidental and contingent”. Love of him resides in our hearts and hate for him is directed toward accidental things. Thus we may represent his sins before our eyes and in our thoughts as stones tied to his clothes on the outside of his body. We love his person but we hate the stones tied to his clothes. This is the amount which the Lawgiver ordered with regard to hating the sinner and not more than this. Most people don’t distinguish between hating the actions outside the body and hating the body. They want to hate the actions but don’t know how to hate them, and so they fall into hating the body. But we’ve [only] been ordered to hate the body in the case of the infidel. So we hate their bodies and everything that issues from them.

As for the believer who sins, we haven’t been ordered to hate him with a hate that extinguishes love of his body and love of his faith in God the Sublime and love of his faith in God’s Apostle—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and love of his faith in all the apostles and love of his faith in all the prophets—peace be upon them—and love of his faith in all the celestial books and love of his faith in the Final Day and everything it contains of gathering and resurrection, Paradise and Hell, the bridge across Hell and the scales, and love of his faith in all the angels—blessings and peace be upon them—and love of his faith in divine foreordaining of his good and his evil. So in this way we love him for every praiseworthy characteristic in him. If our love of him has occurred in advance because of these praiseworthy qualities, it isn’t possible that hate for him will ever enter our hearts. Rather we hate his actions and we invoke blessings upon him, especially if we’ve looked at him with the eye of reality.

If they want to hate the sinner, most people firstly turn to him in hate—before anything else—and they ignore the qualities which cause love of him. They don’t visualize these in their minds and so hate settles in their hearts. This hate spreads to his body and the body becomes something hateful in their view. Now this isn’t permissible and allowed. But God the Sublime knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘Anyone who distinguishes himself from people through his mount and his clothes, his house and his food, is shameless.’

I asked: ‘What’s the cause of his shamelessness?’

He replied: 'He occupies people's hearts with paying attention to him and cuts them off from God the Sublime. Thus his distinguishing himself from them is a cause of their being cut off.'

(479) I said: 'But the veiled who pay attention to this person are [already] cut off, and their paying attention to him does them no harm.'

He replied: 'It increases their alienation more and more.'

He said: 'Likewise, the spirit flees from the body engaged in this kind of distinction because such distinction causes abasement and wretchedness to come over the spirit. Thus the spirit abhors the body's action and flees from it. It doesn't direct the body and guide it to what's proper for it with its creator. And this is the cause of the body's destruction.'

I said: 'Thus distinction entails two evils, an evil for the person himself and an evil for others.'

At that point one of those present—and he was a generous, liberal and openhanded person—said: 'Oh Sayyidī, what's your view—does love of giving alms, if it establishes someone in this form of distinction, cause him harm or not?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It doesn't harm him, but he must conceal his almsgiving as much as he can.'

[14]

He said—God be pleased with him: 'I know a man who, between the prayers of sunset and the evening prayers, bestowed alms amounting to twenty-five *mithqāls* upon countless *fūqarā*', and none of them knew him.'

And the questioner asked: 'Oh Sayyidī, if he conceals it, does his carnal soul still go on yearning for it and find delight in it?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Even if his yearning for it is such that he delights in it and the sight of it is great in his eye so that his carnal soul becomes conceited due to it, this shouldn't hinder action and almsgiving because it may happen that the carnal soul of the person bestowing alms forgets this viewpoint, and the alms come forth unimpaired and God the Sublime accepts them.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'God lengthen our lives so that we come to live sixty and seventy years for the sake of this benefit, namely that we may attain acceptance [for our alms] one particular moment during a long life, because the carnal soul and lust dominate us so that our action and our work are scarcely ever pure and unadulterated.'

He said: 'But this defect shouldn't hinder action. However, if the carnal soul's yearning for it is in the manner of hypocrisy based on it

and the almsgiver does it for the sake of the people, this is a defect that hinders the action and makes it into a sin—even if its form in the eyes of the people has the form of obedience.’

(480) I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—indicated what the eminent authorities (*imāms*) have said—God be pleased with them—that fear of conceit shouldn’t hinder action. Hypocrisy, on the other hand, is a hindrance. God be pleased with them and with this Shaykh—how broad is the scope of his knowledge! I’m greatly amazed at this, and what increases my amazement even further is the fact that he’s an ordinary person without a religious education (*ummī*), yet from him emerge these forms of knowledge that can’t be sustained or enumerated. Nor does he have need to reflect at all before he utters them. How sublime is He Who provides him with these religious sciences and insights concerning the Lord!

Then the questioner repeated his question to him, saying: ‘Oh Sayyidī, inform us how our work involving almsgiving and other things may be purely for the sake of God the Sublime.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Every work you do for the purpose of rewards and good deeds is done for the sake of something other than God the Sublime. Of necessity, doubt will arise concerning it. You’ll say to yourself (your carnal soul), if you bestow alms for the purpose mentioned: “Maybe the person being given the alms doesn’t deserve them. And if he does deserve them, maybe there’s someone worthier and more entitled to them than he is, and closer to God the Sublime when it comes to acceptance of the alms, but this person has escaped my notice.” Your doubt will finally reach the point where you say: “Has God accepted the alms from me or not?” Whatever work doubt enters into contains no portion for God the Sublime because doubt comes from Satan, and Satan can’t approach work that’s for the sake of God—He is sublime and exalted!’

And the questioner asked: ‘Oh Sayyidī, if I’ve given alms not for rewards and good deeds but in order to draw close to God the Sublime, is this a cause of harm or not?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, it causes harm. The intention of drawing close is one of the defects, and work done for its sake comes forth for the sake of a particular interest.’

He said: ‘The meaning of work purely for the sake of God—in the view of those who perform such work—is that they know their Lord’s characteristics of magnificence, perfection, glory and awesomeness, as well as the favors they owe to Him that can’t be



reckoned and counted. They consider that He's worthy that they submit to Him, and that He's deserving that they humble themselves before Him. No thought of any allotment of their carnal soul ever occurs to them, let alone that their work would be for the sake of such an allotment. Rather they consider that if they were to worship their Lord forever and obey Him everlastingly by means of the most difficult worship conceivable and the most burdensome imposition one can impose along with a lengthening of lifetimes and persistence in it as long as the ages went on—(481) they couldn't accomplish anything with regard to our Master's rightful claim—He is sublime—which is a duty upon the servant. Indeed, it's imagined that the bondsman would do works for the allotments of his carnal soul if he were to finish fulfilling the rights of his Master. If he's never been able to acquit himself in full regarding a single one of them, how does he hope to acquit himself in full of all of them? Or how does he hope to become free to do works for the allotments of his carnal soul?

He said—God be pleased with him: 'When the people of Paradise enter Paradise and knowledge of their Creator is increased—He is sublime—they all feel remorse for their shortcomings toward God.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'If you reflect on what we've said, you'll realize that work for rewards cuts one off from God the Sublime and from fulfilling His rightful claims. That's why the one who does such work only increases his distance from God—He is mighty and glorious!'

He said: 'And if you worship God the Sublime because He's deserving of it, it will never be possible for doubt to enter your worship.'

I asked: 'Oh Sayyidī, if the giver of alms, when bestowing the alms, sees that the wealth is God's, not his, and that his body is God's, not his, and that the miserable body of the one receiving the alms is God's, and he sees that everything is God's, and his alms come forth with this intention and he sees nothing at all as belonging to himself—then how is the almsgiving of someone of this description?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The best that there is! We've spoken to you previously about the [divine] wisdom of the Prophet's mission having been postponed—God's blessings and peace be upon him—until he'd reached the age of forty.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that perhaps we'll mention this in what follows—if God is willing!<sup>38</sup>

Then he recounted for us a story which involved himself and a man who was a fool. The gist of it is that he said—God be pleased with him: 'I was acquainted with a person who was a fool and he was one of the godly men. During the cold season he had no garment to protect him from the cold. I was worried about his situation. I felt much compassion and pity for him.' He said: 'Sometimes one of the people would bestow on him as alms a garment to protect him from the cold. Then someone who knows no fear (481) of God—He is mighty and glorious—would come and remove it from him and go off.'

He said: 'I came to him with a garment to protect him from the cold. He was spending nights in one of the mills where they ground [grain]. I came to this place and I found him there. I spoke to him and he responded to me. I said: "I've brought you a garment to put on." He replied: "I won't accept it and I won't put it on." I'd offered it to him as alms with the intention that God would fulfill such-and-such a wish for me. No one knew of this but God—He is sublime! When I heard his refusal, I repeated what I said to him and reiterated it several times. At that he said: "I won't wear a garment that's been given for such-and-such a wish"—and he mentioned the wish itself. "I wear what's purely for the sake of God!" I then went off and left the garment in his vicinity. I entrusted it to the people of the mill, telling them to dress him in it. But the garment remained there for days and he never wore it. Now if he was a human being and refused to accept what was for something other than God, how is it with the Creator—He is exalted—? But God the Sublime knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'There was a certain devoted worshipper (*ʿābid*) who'd received illumination through worship and he was ill with the malady dropsy. He felt [the arrival] of death and he was conscious, since most people suffering from the malady of dropsy remain conscious. When he beheld the agony of death and knew nothing like it had ever come over him in his life, this stirred in him a fear of God the Sublime and his heart filled with dread of meeting Him—He is mighty and glorious! The great amount of worship he'd previously performed entered his thought and he experienced joy in it and his heart became warm because of it. This he set over against that fear and it caused a sense of security and well-being in his heart. But when God realized he

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<sup>38</sup> In fact al-Lamaṭī doesn't deal with this subject later in the book.

was relying on his worship, God dispossessed him—He is mighty and glorious—and he died dispossessed. God protect us from this!’ He said: ‘And how many devoted worshippers like him are in Hell, worshippers God sent to Hell because they relied on their works!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Without any doubt someone would only rely on his worship if he’d undertaken it for the sake of reward and the carnal soul’s allotment, whereas if it had been purely for God, it would be of use to them on this awesome day.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘On the other hand, the worship of the knowers of God the Sublime is for the sake of His noble being and His elevated Essence (*dhāt*). They perform it by way of showing honor and esteem, and indicating awe and reverence, and they realize that even if they worshipped during their whole life and struck their foreheads against solid rocks, continuously and forever, they wouldn’t fulfill any of the rightful claims of divine lordliness. So how should they demand rewards for themselves. Only someone who thinks he’s fulfilled the claim and undertaken his duty would demand the reward. But they consider themselves to have fallen short—God be pleased with them—and not to have accomplished anything at all for God’s sake. Of course they observe the action which emerges from them but this is from Him—He is exalted—not from them. So how would they demand the reward for what someone other than themselves has done?’

(483) I said: ‘And what was this worshipper dispossessed of? As for divine knowledge, he didn’t have any. Had he actually had some, he wouldn’t have relied on his work. Thus he was either dispossessed of the faith or his good deeds.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘He was dispossessed of the good deeds he’d done. Indeed, considering them and relying on them removed from him all the mercies that result from them, and one and all the good deeds turned into acts of disobedience and sins, for which he’ll be punished in Hell.’

I said: ‘Isn’t it enough as punishment that they become nullified by his considering them—without their turning into sins?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Considering them is what actually turns them into sins. Should you see a lance heading for you and know it will surely enter your side, if you want to protect yourself from it with a shield, you only protect yourself with it if you’re convinced and certain that the shield is stronger than the blow of the lance and will ward it off and ward off other things. If you knew the shield wouldn’t ward off the lance, you wouldn’t protect yourself with it. You’d seek refuge with the one brandishing the

lance and enter his protection, hoping to please him so he might have mercy on you and turn his lance away from you.'

He said: 'It's the same with this worshipper. The only reason he set his worship over against that fear and his heart grew calm and a sense of security and well-being entered into him, was because he saw his worship as more powerful than God's rightful claim on him, and more effective and productive, so that his worship would ward it off and ward off other things as well. Now this is the height of error.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Moreover, all religious observances, all acts of devotion and the totality of religious prescriptions, were instituted by God in order that the word *tawhīd* (God's oneness) be established and that knowledge of their Lord occur in the hearts of mankind. For if this divine knowledge is attained, the goal is attained. If it isn't attained, intercession with failure to attain the goal is of no consequence.'

He said: 'Sins are forbidden because they entail the bondsman being cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious! So if acts of devotion cause the bondsman to be cut off, they're sins without any doubt. But God the Sublime knows best!'

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(484) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Among the lords of the Makhzan and people of tyranny there's the [occasional] believer whose heart is attached to his Lord—He is exalted—as well as the person who's cut off from God—He is mighty and glorious! The sign of this is constriction (*inqibāḍ*) and expansiveness (*inbisāṭ*). The person among them who's constricted [emotionally] and upset knows that he's violating his Lord's command and obeying someone other than Him, and he's disturbed in his mind and perplexed. This then is the first of them. Moreover, he's among those who are saved in the hereafter—after the reckoning and the punishment, the blame and the reproach. Nevertheless, God the Sublime pardons him. As for the second one, he finds disobedience and oppressing the worshippers sweet, the way the dung beetle finds that filth and eating garbage is sweet.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that it was previously stated<sup>39</sup> that he's among those who'll be the most severely punished on the Day of Resurrection.

He spoke these words to a man who asked his advice about associating with the Makhzan. The man feared for his life if he didn't associate with them. Al-Dabbāgh directed him to do good

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<sup>39</sup> See p. 540.

[while in the Makhzan] and entrusted him with looking after the poor. He spoke the above words to him and added something further, saying: 'The believer is like a bird that lands on filthy ground—he then constricts himself and draws in his wings—and on clean ground—and he then feels expansive and opens out his wings—and goes on seeking [for food].'

And he said to him: 'The people cut off from God—God protect us from this—if they extort dirhems and put them in their pockets, upon these dirhems is a name from among God the Sublime's names. If someone who's attached to God the Sublime comes and acquires these dirhems with deceit, whether by a request or some other way, so as to take them from this cut-off person, he rescues angels dear to God the Sublime—He is mighty and glorious! This is so because upon every letter from among God the Sublime's names there's an angel. And upon every name among God the Sublime's names there's an angel who has the strength of seventy angels. As long as the dirhems that contain the names are with the person cut off from God, every one of those angels is like a bird that's been caught, bound and had its head brought out from under its wing.<sup>40</sup> If a person attached to God comes and takes it with some form of deceit, the angel experiences joy and delight, and his dejection due to the dislike angels feel—blessings and peace be upon them—for people cut off from God disappears. But God the Sublime knows best!'

(485) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The weak bondsman is caught and his destruction (*tadmīr*) lies in his planning (*tadbīr*) since he isolates his body from God the Sublime. He looks after the body's affair by planning and concern for it, spending his effort to fulfill its wishes. And while he does all this, he's forgetful of God the Sublime. God the Sublime then consigns him to his carnal soul (self) and causes him to perceive other things than Himself, just as he's devoted to other things than God. You see him experience pain from cold and heat, and wounds and other kinds of injuries inflict harm on him. Had he not isolated his carnal soul (self) from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—but placed the soul's reins in his Creator's hands, sundered his sight from other than God and obliterated from his heart all that's other than Him, he'd have experienced no kind of pain, even if he walked on thorns of iron and [sharp] roasting spits.' But because of his forgetfulness of God—He is exalted—the burden upon the bondsman became great and religious duties were placed upon him. The apostles were sent with

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<sup>40</sup> The sense of '...had its head brought out from under its wing' is unclear.

legal prescriptions in order to lead him back from forgetfulness to God—He is exalted! Were it not for forgetfulness of God the Sublime, human beings would be like the angels. They wouldn't be obliged to support these burdensome religious duties. Were it not for forgetfulness of God the Sublime, Hell wouldn't exist at all. And were it not for forgetfulness of God the Sublime, the bondsman would see that his actions are created by his Lord—He is exalted! Then he wouldn't have a carnal soul that he sees, much less attribute anything to it. Indeed, if he were like this, he'd be permanently extinguished (*fānī*). And how would someone such as this have religious duties placed upon him? But God the Sublime knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The most stupid of people is a person who's attached to something that departs, i.e. something that passes away, namely the world and whatever is connected with it. And the most intelligent of people is a person who's attached to what remains, namely God—He is exalted! Indeed, if the transient is caught up in what's transient, neither benefits the other. But if the transient is caught up in the eternal, what's transient becomes eternal.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The people say no remedy for death exists. Yet a remedy for it does exist. The remedy is what we mentioned. Nor is there any remedy other than what we mentioned.'

Then he swore an oath in the name of God. He expressed his oath with emphasis and repeated it several times. And he said: 'If the bondsman attaches value to God—He is exalted—with extraordinary attachment, outwardly and inwardly, then he won't pass away and he won't die the death that people are familiar with.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'When most of the members of the *Dīwān* die, it's they who ritually wash themselves. On the bier you see a corpse as well as a corpsewasher, and the two are one. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[15]

(486) Let's end this chapter with a wondrous story that I heard from al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him! One day I was speaking with him and I mentioned the veneration people have for the worshippers (*'ubbād*) isolated in caves and on islands in the sea. I praised them at length and said: 'They've devoted themselves to worshipping God—He is exalted—and divested themselves of everything other than Him.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'I'll tell you a story. Now listen to it! And God is my sufficiency and my interrogator if I've added anything in it.'

I said: 'God protect us from such an idea entering our imaginations or occurring in our thoughts.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'One day I was in the Muṣallā (outdoor place of prayer) by the Bāb al-Futūḥ with Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, i.e. the Pivot. It occurred to us to go to an island in the Great Ocean that washes against the city of Salā. So we went there. And behold, it's an island a mile long and it contains two sweet-water springs. There we found a man worshipping God the Sublime and he was about forty years old. On the island there were rooms cut into stone and in the middle of them were cubicles like the small rooms inside a bathhouse. I don't know who hollowed them out because the place is very far from any inhabited area. No one comes here except perhaps ships on occasion.

There's a kind of tree on the island whose fruit resembles the almond but it's different as well. And there's another kind of tree that resembles the *tighāz*-tree<sup>41</sup> which is known among us, except that it's shorter. It has broad leaves that are always green. I looked at the man and behold, his food was the fruit of the tree that resembles the almond-tree, and the green leaves of the other tree resembling the *tighāz*. This was his food all the time. We looked at his clothing and behold, he used branches from the tree resembling the *tighāz*—and these were delicate branches he plaited together to make something like a girdle. He girded himself with it and so covered his private parts. The rest of him wasn't covered.

We spoke to him and asked him: "How long have you been in this place?" He replied: "I've been here about forty years." We said: "You seem to be no more than forty years old. When did you come here?" "I came here with my father when I was about five years old", he replied. "I was just a small boy. I remained with my father for about twenty-five years until (487) he died. Then I buried him here." We said to him: "Show us his grave so we may visit it." He showed us his [father's] grave and we invoked God on his behalf.

Then we began to talk [further] with the man. We found his tongue was very heavy because of not having associated much with people when he was small. We found he spoke Arabic because he belonged to a tribe from the vicinity of Tunis and they speak Arabic. We questioned him about the faith and found that he knew of God but he believed He was in a place (*al-jiha*). We forbade him to do this and explained to him what's correct. And we found that he knew of the Apostle—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and that he's the

41 Perhaps the hackberry tree; in French 'micocoulier'.

chief of the first and the last [of mankind]. Likewise, he knew Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him—and he knew Fāṭima, the daughter of the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him! We asked him about her son, our lord Ḥasan, but we found that he didn't know of him. And we asked him about the month of Ramaḍān but we found he didn't know of it. He mentioned that he fasts for thirty days but the days are spread out over the year. So we explained to him the obligation to fast during Ramaḍān. And we specified for him its time in the year. Then we asked him what he knew by heart of the Qurʾān. But we found that the only thing he knew by heart was: "Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds, the Compassionate, the Merciful—those on whom You've bestowed favors!" Thus he knew this much by heart but in distorted form.

And we asked: "What does your worship consist of?" He replied: "Bowing and prostration before God—He is mighty and glorious!" We then asked him: "Do you sleep?" He said: "I sleep from when the sun starts to sink at sunset until it becomes completely dark. All the rest of the time consists of bowing and prostration."

Then I asked: "Would you like to go to the land of Islam and live with its people, since you follow their religion and believe in their Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—?"

He replied: "Yes, I'm a Muslim among other Muslims but I won't leave this place until I die." And while we were speaking to him and drawing closer to him during the conversation, he was shying away because of his lack of familiarity with people.'

Al-Dabbāgh said: 'And he couldn't support eating our food. His body couldn't support it since he'd been accustomed to something different for so long.'

And he said: 'We looked at him and behold, he had with him about one-eighth of a *mudd*<sup>42</sup> of *riyāls* [silver coins] and among them several *mithqāls* of gold. We asked him: "Where did you get this from?"

He replied: "Ship captains sometimes come to the island. They see me and they give me some *riyāls* and dinars by way of paying their respects and for blessings. And they make a request of me. I invoke God on their behalf and they depart."

We said to him: "Give us these dinars and *riyāls*. You have no need of them since you're not going to spend them to build a house or arrange a marriage or clothe yourself. They're of no use to you.

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<sup>42</sup> One *mudd* is equivalent to 12.5 kilos according to Cigar, p. 271.



We'll take them, (488) for we can make use of them." But he refused. He said: "I won't give you my money."

Al-Dabbāgh said: 'We stayed with him a long while for the purpose of teaching him the legal prescriptions of Islam. Then we bade him farewell and departed. When he saw us walk on the surface of the water with our feet and that the water didn't reach us and we didn't sink, he began invoking God's protection against us and he thought we were demons.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And he's still alive on his island even now which is the 2nd of Dhū'l-Hijja, the last month of the year 1129/6 November 1717.'<sup>43</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that there are lessons contained in this story:

The first lesson is recognition of the bounty we receive through association with the believers. For this is what leads us to knowledge of the legal prescriptions of Islam and the Prophet's affairs—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and to knowledge of his and his Companions' way of life—God be pleased with them—as well as what his era and the era of his Companions was like and other such matters that increase one's faith. Indeed, since this man lacked association with the people of Islam, he lacked knowledge of these matters, so that I said to our Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'His father did him harm by bringing him to this island and cutting him off from the people of Islam. Had he left him with them, it would have been better and more felicitous for him.'

He replied to me: 'You're right. Here the value of the believers is made known. Even if they were sinners, there's nothing that can match their knowledge of religion and the legal prescriptions of Islam. Praise be to God for association with the people of Islam and for being in crowds with them in markets and other such places, but especially for being in crowds with them in places of goodness. That's why the shaykh, our lord °Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī says—God be pleased with him: "Verily, looking at the faces of the believers increases one's faith."<sup>44</sup>

The second lesson is recognition of the bounty God has bestowed on us with regard to food and drink, clothing, sleep and comfort, marriage and procreation, and other such things, which blessings this devout worshipper was deprived of. And just as he was deprived of recognition of this bounty, he was also deprived of these blessings.

<sup>43</sup> From: '...and I mentioned the veneration people have', at the opening of section [15], cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 35, l. 6 to p. 36, l. -9.

<sup>44</sup> Unidentified.

Had he associated with the people of Islam, he'd have enjoyed these blessings and given God thanks for them. His thanks for them would have been the complete equivalent and replacement of his worship on that island during his lifetime.

The third lesson is how many people are deceived regarding recluses in the deserts and secluded places, and regarding the belief that the latter possess perfection, and that the station they reach isn't reached by the Friends (489) who are knowers of God submerged among the people.<sup>45</sup>

And I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'Sometimes I look at the lights of faith which come forth from bodies in order to be in contact with Barzakh. These lights vary as to their thinness and thickness. Thinness indicates weakness of faith, whereas thickness indicates its strength. Then we look at the worshippers (*ʿubbād*) who are in caves and in deserts, and see that thinness prevails in their lights, except for a few of them. And we look at ordinary people and we see that their lights are better than those recluses, because ordinary people rely on God's generosity—He is exalted—whereas the worshippers, for the most part, rely on their worship.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The devout worshipper is only saved from his worship if inwardly he sees it as belonging to his Lord and this persists in his thought. If this is absent from his thought and he begins to see his worship as from himself, then he's closer to perdition than to safety.'

And when I heard this story from our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—a feeling of shame and humility came over me due to awareness of the blessings that God has bestowed on us, though we're forgetful of them.

Then I said to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'Why didn't you grasp this man by the hand and take him from the island to one of the cities of Islam, so he might be happy and God the Sublime might show him mercy?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This is his station in which God has stationed him. Sublime is He Who possesses this dominion!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'A person who looks at the wonders on the face of the earth finds they're sufficient for him and he has no need of anything else with regard to his Lord's oneness (*tawḥīd*). Indeed, he sees on the face of the earth creatures gathered

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<sup>45</sup> From: 'I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that there are lessons...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 36, l. -8 to p. 37, l. 3.

together, i.e. everyone who's on the face of the earth, and among them is the intelligent and the unintelligent, a person living a life of ease and someone deprived. One person kills another, one shows mercy to another. One person's thoughts are preoccupied with the affairs of the world, another with affairs of commerce. One is preoccupied with his neighbors' affairs, another with the affairs of religious learning and another still with the affairs of the hereafter.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'My shaykh Sayyidī ʿUmar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī informed me that he was sitting by the Bāb al-Maḥrūq<sup>46</sup> on a Thursday and he began to look at the interiors of those coming out through the gate. A man came out and he looked at his interior. And behold, his interior was wholly preoccupied with concern for So-and-so, his beloved, (490) and how he might win her and how he should act in this regard. This thought dominated him and made him forget anything else. Then another person came out. He looked at him and behold, his heart was just like the first one except he was attached to a youth. Then a third person came out. He looked at him and behold, his heart was attached to the world. Thought of the world dominated him such that he'd become unaware of anything else. A fourth person then came out. He looked at him and behold, his interior was attached to love of drinking wine and desire for it. Nothing else was in his thoughts. Then a fifth person came out. He looked at him and behold, his thought was preoccupied with the hereafter and its affairs. This dominated him to the extent that it was visible in him. A sixth person then came out and behold, his heart was filled with love of religious learning and his Qurʾānic recitation. Nothing else occupied his thought. A seventh person came out. He looked at him and behold, his thought was only occupied with the love of riding horses. This dominated him so that it made him oblivious to anything else. An eighth person came out and behold, his thought was only occupied with love of agriculture and how to pursue it. He thought of nothing else. A ninth person then came out and behold, his thought was filled with love of the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and this dominated him so that his thought was only occupied with the Prophet's affairs—God's blessings and peace be upon him—i.e. how he was before his mission and how he was after it, and then what he was like after revelation had been sent down to him. He was preoccupied with his sojourn in Mecca and with his sojourn in Medina—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Then a tenth

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<sup>46</sup> Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index.

person came out. He looked at him and behold, his heart was filled with love of God—He is mighty and glorious—Lord of the worlds and Creator of everything. The person occupied his thought with God's awesomeness and His magnificence, and His transcendence and His sanctity, as well as the lofty attributes He possesses—He is sublime!

The shaykh Sayyidī ʿUmar said—God be pleased with him: 'Then I looked at the interior thing that governs them and arises from God the Sublime's will concerning them. I perceived it inside their interiors like a rope that leads them to what God wishes—He is exalted—though they're unaware of it. They think action comes from themselves and that the choice has been accorded them.' He said: 'This was a great lesson for me and I understood: "There is no god but He" and that God the Sublime has no partner in His sovereignty. He does what He pleases and passes judgement as He wishes. "No one repels His judgement, and He is swift in the reckoning" (13/41). And I understood that mankind is in [a state of] great unawareness and immense veiling.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this is how the knowers of God think—God be pleased with them!

And I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'Two men may pass through a particular place (491) and before they've gone very far, one of them is forgiven [by God].'

I asked: 'Why is that?' He replied: 'Because he knows how to think about God's creatures, whereas his companion who's walking alongside him is absent-minded and heedless.'

.....

Here then—God give you success—is what seemed proper to us to write down of the Shaykh's words—God be pleased with him—in the present chapter, this being the chapter about how darkness enters the bondsmen and their actions, and how the lights enter them. If this is added to what was dealt with previously concerning the ten degrees of darkness in dream interpretation, namely: 1) the degree of doing something reprehensible through negligence and 2) the degree of doing something forbidden through negligence, 3) the degree of doing something reprehensible on purpose and 4) the degree of doing something forbidden on purpose, 5) the degree of simple ignorance about light matters of religious belief and 6) the degree of compound ignorance about this, 7) the degree of simple ignorance about serious religious doctrine and 8) the degree of compound ignorance about this, 9) the degree of simple ignorance about his lofty eminence (the Prophet)—God's blessings and peace be upon

him—and 10) the degree of compound ignorance about this—and if the reader understands what we related in that chapter as well as in this chapter, then he'll acquire great knowledge. God give benefit by means of that knowledge to [all] who come and go, through the blessing (*baraka*) of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—amen! Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!

## CHAPTER FOUR

[1] Pp. 579-81 The Dīwān or Council of the godly men convenes in the Cave of Hīrā<sup>3</sup>. It consists of the Support of the era, the seven Pivots, the Wakīl and other godly men and women from among the living and the dead.

[2] P. 582. The Dīwān convenes at the hour when the Prophet was born which is also the time that prayers are answered. If you recite the Qur<sup>ā</sup>nic verse 18/107, God will cause you to wake up at the very time when prayers are answered.

[3] P. 582. To begin with the Dīwān was made up of angels but the angels were gradually replaced as Friends of God came into the world.

[4] Pp. 582-83. The angels who remain in the Dīwān were guardians over the Prophet's body in the world. When the Prophet is present, they hasten to enter his light and become invisible.

[5] P. 583. In every city there are many angels who help 'people of the power of free disposal' when they don't have the capacity to carry out some task. The angels are disguised, sometimes as a gentleman or a poor man, sometimes even as a child.

[6] Pp. 583-84. Al-Dabbāgh explains how angels intervene if someone opens a chapter of al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* at the grave of a Friend and makes a request. Abraham, Moses and other prophets are present in the Dīwān on the Night of Power.

[7] P. 585. Al-Dabbāgh says he's seen Khadīja and ʿĀʿisha when they were present in the Dīwān on the Night of Power. ʿĀʿisha's light is the brighter of the two, indicating her superiority over Khadīja.

[8] Pp. 585-86. The origin of the Night of Power. When God first created light in the sun's orb, the angels fled from it out of fear. Eventually they grew calm, seeing that the light caused them no harm. Since then they celebrate this event every year which is the Night of Power. God created Adam on a Friday. Jews and Christians were offered Friday but they chose Saturday and Sunday respectively.

[9] Pp. 586-90. Al-Dabbāgh describes 'the moment of Friday'. God completed the creation of the world at that moment. It moves about and is very brief but always occurs during some part of Friday.

Relation of the moment of Friday to the moment of the Prophet's sermon.

[10] Pp. 590-92. Syriac is the language of the Dīwān, as well as being the language of the spirits and angels. Al-Dabbāgh has visited the dome of Barzakh and seen the spirits of all those who received the great illumination. He declares his spiritual superiority over godly men such as Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī.

[11] Pp. 592-95. When the Support is absent, disagreements cause Friends of God in the Dīwān to kill one another. Otherwise, when members of the Dīwān gather, they decide among themselves what will happen every day in the sublunar and translunar worlds.

[12] Pp. 595-98. Those drawn unto God (*al-majādhīb*) aren't admitted to the Dīwān. But at the end of time when the Anti-Christ appears, the chief of the Dīwān will be such a person. The story about Sayyidī Ḥammād al-Majdhūb. How the Friend of God has two rights when he begs, one based on faith and one based on knowledge of God (*ma<sup>c</sup>rifa*).

[13] Pp. 598-601. The difference between a person drawn unto God and the traveller on the path. The *majdhūb* is affected by what he sees and imitates it. The traveller on the path is a tranquil ocean. The story about a member of the Dīwān who wants to know whether his son will be a traveller or someone drawn unto God. The Support tests the child.

[14] Pp. 601-02. Friends of God do some astonishing things but like everyone else their actions come from God. The Friend can see God's actions in other people but not in himself.

[15] P. 602. Al-Lamaṭī asks why the Prophet didn't have miraculous powers like Solomon, David, Jesus, etc. Al-Dabbāgh explains that God has given all these powers to members of the Dīwān but their powers are kept hidden.

[16] Pp. 602-04. People of the power of free disposal aren't permitted to use their powers to destroy infidels. The story of the man who was divested of his miraculous powers because he used them openly in a sea battle with the infidels.

[17] Pp. 604-06. How the Friend of God takes on another body, even the body of an animal. If he feels pain, it isn't through the new body but in his spirit.

[18] P. 606. The spirit can leave the body for different lengths of time. The body doesn't perish as long as the spirit yearns for the body. Through the spirit's yearning the body obtains life.

[19] Pp. 606-10. A Friend of God with the power of free disposal can take money out of anyone's pocket. Stories that illustrate this

supernatural ability. If Sayyidī Maṣṣūr took someone's sandals from the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs, it was because he saw on the Well-guarded Tablet that they belonged to him.

## (9) CHAPTER FOUR

On the Dīwān of the godly men (*ṣāliḥūn*)—God be pleased with them one and all!

[1]

I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'The Dīwān is in the Cave of Ḥirā'<sup>1</sup> (10) which is where the Prophet undertook pious devotions—God's blessings and peace be upon him—before his mission.' He said—God be pleased with him: (11) 'The Support (*al-ghawth*) sits outside the cave. Mecca is behind his right shoulder and Medina is in front of his (12) left knee. On his right are four Pivots (*aqṭāb*) who are Mālikites, adherents of the school of jurisprudence of the Imam Mālik b. Anas—God be pleased with him! Three Pivots are on his left, each one an adherent (14) of the [other] three schools of jurisprudence. Then in front of him is (15) the Wakīl who's called the *qāḍī* of the Dīwān. At this time he too is (16) a Mālikite from the Banū Khālid<sup>2</sup> who live in the region of Baṣra. His name is Sayyidī Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Baṣrāwī. The Support speaks to the Wakīl, and the latter is called the Wakīl (deputy) because he speaks on behalf of everyone who's in the Dīwān.' Al-Dabbāgh said: 'The action of the seven Pivots is under the command of the Support, and each of the seven Pivots has under him a special group which acts on his behalf. There are six rows behind the Wakīl and their circle extends from the fourth Pivot to the Pivot who's on the left of the [group of] three. The seven Pivots make up the ends of the circle. This is the first row. Behind it is the second row [arranged] in its way and in its circle. Then comes the third row, etc., until the sixth which is the last of them.'

He said: 'Women are present in the Dīwān, though their number is small. There are three rows of them. This is in the area of the three Pivots who are on the left, above the circle of the first row in the space between the Support and the three Pivots.'

<sup>1</sup> A cave on Mt Ḥirā' near Mecca where Muḥammad regularly withdrew from the world in preparation for his mission as prophet.

<sup>2</sup> Unidentified tribe; not found in handbooks that deal with *nisbas*.



He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Some of the perfect from among the dead are present in the Dīwān and are [included] in the rows with the living. The dead are distinguished by three things. One is that their outward appearance doesn’t change, by contrast with the appearance and form of the living. A living person sometimes shaves, or sometimes he changes his clothes, etc. As for the dead, their states don’t change. So if you see a man in the Dīwān whose outward appearance doesn’t change, know he’s one of the dead. If you see he’s shaven and his hair doesn’t grow, know he died in that particular state. If you see the hair on his head in a particular state and it doesn’t grow or diminish and it isn’t shaved, likewise know he’s dead and that he died in that state. The second thing is that they aren’t consulted about the affairs of the living because they have no power to act regarding these affairs. They’ve been transported to another world at a very great distance from the world (17) of the living. On the other hand, they’re consulted about the affairs of the dead.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s one of the rules for a visitor to graves that if he wishes to invoke God on behalf of the grave’s occupant and wishes one of God’s Friends to act as intermediary so God the Sublime will answer his prayer—then he must seek His favor—He is exalted—through a dead Friend. This is more conducive to success in his purpose and brings the answer to his prayer closer.’

[And he said:] ‘The third distinction is that the body of the dead person has no shadow. So if the dead man is standing between you and the sun, you won’t see him cast a shadow. The secret behind this is that he’s present in the body of his spirit, not in his ephemeral, earthen body. And the body of the spirit is light, not heavy, and transparent, not dense.’ He said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘How often I’ve gone to the Dīwān or to one of the gatherings of the Friends of God—and the sun had already risen—and then when they saw me from a distance, they came forth to meet me and with the two eyes of my head I saw them distinguished from one another, the one with his shadow and the other with no shadow!’<sup>3</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Those present in the Dīwān who are dead come down to it from Barzakh. They fly by means of the spirit’s flying. Then when they’re at a certain distance—not far from the Dīwān’s location—they come down to earth and walk on their legs until they reach the Dīwān. They do this out of politeness

<sup>3</sup> From: ‘The Dīwān is in the Cave of Hīrā<sup>3</sup>...’ cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 201, ll. 3 to -1.

toward the living and out of fear of them.' He said: 'It's the same with the men of the invisible realm (*rijāl al-ghayb*) when one of them visits another. He comes travelling by means of his spirit. But when he's close to the other's location, he acts politely and walks, adopting the walk of his heavy body out of politeness and fear.'

He said: 'Angels are also present in the *Dīwān*. They're behind the rows. And the perfect Jinn are also present. They're the spirit-beings. They're behind everyone and they don't amount to a complete row.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'The benefit from the presence of the angels and the Jinn is that the Friends of God act in matters which their bodies have the ability to reach, whereas when it comes to other matters, their bodies are unable to reach them. They then seek help from the angels and the Jinn in the matters their bodies are unable to reach.'

He said: 'On some occasions the Prophet is present in the *Dīwān*—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and if he's present—blessings and peace be upon him—he sits in the place of the Support. The Support sits in the place of the *Wakīl* and the *Wakīl* moves back to the row. When the Prophet comes—God's blessings and peace be upon him—along with him come lights that can't be supported. Indeed, these are lights which burn, terrify (18) and straightway kill. They're lights of awe, majesty and grandeur. If we were to imagine forty men who've attained an unsurpassable degree of bravery and they were suddenly overcome by these lights, they'd immediately fall down unconscious. But God the Sublime bestows on His Friends the power to receive the lights. None the less, only a few of them can cope with the matters that emerge at the moment when the Prophet is present—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

He said: 'And the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—speaks with the Support.'<sup>4</sup> He said: 'Similarly, when the Prophet is absent—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the Support possesses penetrating lights so that the people of the *Dīwān* are unable to approach him but they sit at a distance from him. The command that comes down from God the Sublime can't be sustained by a body other than the body of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And if it issues from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the only body that can sustain it is the body of the Support. From the body of the Support it's passed on to the seven Pivots, and from the seven Pivots it's passed on to the people of the *Dīwān*.'

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<sup>4</sup> From: 'Those present in the *Dīwān* who are dead...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 201, l. -1 to p. 202, l. 16.

[2]

As for the hour [of the convening] of the Dīwān, this has already been discussed.<sup>5</sup> It's the hour when the Prophet was born—God be pleased with him—and it's the hour when prayers are answered during the final third of the night, concerning which *ḥadīths* such as the following have been transmitted: 'Our Lord descends every night to the sky of the world when the final third of the night remains and says: "Whoever invokes Me I will answer him."' <sup>6</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that whoever wishes to attain this hour when he feels the desire for sleep, let him recite: 'But those who believe and do righteous deeds—for them shall be the gardens of Paradise' (18/107), and let him ask God the Sublime to wake him at the said hour. He'll then wake up during it. This is what the shaykh °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Tha°labī<sup>7</sup> has said—God be pleased with him! Moreover, we've tested this innumerable times, as have others besides us. It even happened to a particular group more than once that they recited the Qur'ānic verse in question (19) and asked God the Sublime to make them wake up at the said hour—each one of them did this by himself without his companions' knowledge—and when they awoke, they all awoke at the same time.

[3]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'At first the Dīwān was comprised of angels but when God sent the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the Dīwān began to be comprised of the Friends of God of this religious community. It became clear that those angels were substitutes for the Friends of this honored religious community. For we've seen that if the Friend of God comes forth in the world and God bestows illumination on him and he becomes one of the people of the Dīwān, he then comes to a special place in the first row or somewhere else and sits in it. The angel that was there ascends upward. And if another Friend of God appears, he comes to a place and the angel that was in that place ascends upward. This then was the beginning of constituting the Dīwān [and so it continued] until the Dīwān was completed—praise be to God! Whenever a Friend of God appeared, an angel ascended upward.'

[4]

[He said:] 'As for the angels that remain in the Dīwān, they're located behind the six rows, as previously mentioned. Moreover,

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<sup>5</sup> See p. 393.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., II, p. 18; *Concordance* VI, p. 414.

<sup>7</sup> See p. 475, ftn. 140.

they're the angels of the body of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who were guardians over it in the world. When the light of his body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was distributed among the people of the Dīwān, the angels of the noble body remained with that noble light.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'And if the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is present in the Dīwān and the lights that can't be sustained come with him, the angels that are with the people of the Dīwān make haste and enter into his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And as long as the Prophet is in the Dīwān—God's blessings and peace be upon him—none of the angels is visible. Then when the Prophet leaves the Dīwān—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the angels return to their posts.<sup>8</sup> But God knows best!'

[5]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'In every one of the cities there's a great number of angels, seventy for example, or more or less. They provide help to the people of the power of free disposal (*ahl al-taṣarruf*) among the Friends of God when it comes to what the Friend's body can't support.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And those angels that are in the cities have the appearance of Adam's offspring. One of them you come across in the form of a gentleman (*khwāja*), another in the form of a man of poverty (*faqīr*), and another still you come across in the form of a small child. They're submerged among the people but the people are unaware of them.'

[6]

(20) On this subject he told us stories—God be pleased with him—which contain secrets that are beyond description and can't be supported. The reason for his imparting these words to us was that he heard me mention to someone present: 'They say whoever takes a chapter from Sayyidī al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and brings it to the grave of a Friend of God, opens it and seeks favor with God the Sublime through the men in its chain of transmission, as well as the Friend in the grave—his request will be granted, especially if it's the book's final chapter [*al-Tawḥīd*].' I then asked him—God be pleased with him—about the truth of what they say.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'In every city there are a number of angels. If they see a bondsman requests something from God and they see it's been divinely decreed, they guide the bondsman correctly and accompany him. They confer on him the

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<sup>8</sup> From: 'And if the Prophet...is present in the Dīwān...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 202, ll. 18-30.

means to succeed and Satan withdraws from the path. But if they see what's contrary to this, they abandon him and Satan is present with him. So if they see someone take a chapter of Sayyidī al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and bring it to the grave of a Friend of God and they see that his request is granted, they guide him correctly and cast into his heart urgency and longing for his wish. Moreover, they accompany him to the grave, while he carries the material body of the book and they carry its secrets. And when he supplicates God, they say amen after his supplication and his request is then granted. If they see that the request isn't to be granted, they take away the book's secrets. The person only brings the material body and Satan appears to him on the path with doubt and dispersal of the thought, so that no sweetness remains for him in the supplication.'

I asked him: 'What's the secret added to the material body of the book which they take away?'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'What's the secret that distinguishes the material body of honey from the material body (21) of tar?' I replied: 'Sweetness.' He said: 'So that's the thing added to its material body.' 'Yes, it is', I agreed. Then he said: 'It's the same with every book that has a secret added to it. And just as honey isn't useful for its purpose if it loses its sweetness, the same holds true for a book if its secret is removed.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'How many a page or a piece of paper with the names of God the Sublime written on it falls to the ground and people tread on it with their feet! Were it not for the angels that remove the secrets of these names, the greater part of the people would perish. Praise be to God for His generosity and benevolence! But God knows best!'

And I asked him—God be pleased with him: 'Are the prophets present in the Dīwān—blessings and peace be upon them—for instance our lord Abraham, our lord Moses, and others from among the apostles—the best of blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon them—?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'They're present in the Dīwān on one night of the year.' I asked: 'What night is that?' He replied: 'The Night of Power. On that night the prophets and the apostles are present, the Heavenly Assembly of the intimate angels as well as others are present, and the chief of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is present, as are his chaste wives and the noble great men who were his Companions—God be pleased with them one and all!'<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> From: 'And I asked him: "Are the prophets present..."' cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 202, ll. -8 to -5.

[7]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the disagreement among the *ḥadīth* scholars over whether our mistress Khadīja is superior to our mistress ʿĀʾisha, or the other way round.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘We’ve seen the two of them with the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—in the *Diwān* on the Night of Power. We then saw that the light of ʿĀʾisha is greater than the light of Khadīja—God be pleased with them both!’

[8]

Next he recounted for us the origin of the Night of Power—God be pleased with him! He said: ‘Before the creation of light in the sun’s celestial orb the world was dark. The angels lived in the world, in the earth and the sky, in the caves and plains, and in the mountains and rivers. When God the Sublime created light in the sun and thereby illuminated the world, the angels of the sky and the angels of the earth were thrown in an uproar. They feared the world would be destroyed and that something (22) awesome would befall them. The angels of the sky came down to earth, and with the angels of the earth they began to flee from the bright light toward the shadow, that is from the brightness of day to the shadow of night. They fled from brightness they didn’t know toward the shadow they were familiar with. They were terrified and suppliant, and gathered together to beseech and entreat God the Sublime, imploring Him and in fear of Him. They sought to please Him and took refuge with Him lest He be angry with them. Their only thought was that God the Sublime intended to roll up this world and so they gathered to implore and raise supplications as described, thinking that what they feared was about to occur at any moment. Thus as the bright light increased for them, they fled from it toward the shadow and they continued in this state. The bright light abolished the shadow and they fled until they traversed the whole earth and returned to the place they’d started from. But when they saw that nothing happened, they felt safe and returned to their posts on earth and in the sky. It then became their practice to gather together one night every year. Such is the origin of the Night of Power.’

I said: ‘This requires that the Night of Power existed before the creation of Adam—peace be upon him—whereas the contents of *ḥadīths* require that it’s something special for this religious community.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘What’s special for this noble religious community is the reward for it, the good it entails,

and success in knowing it thanks to the blessing of our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! As for the previous religious communities, they weren't afforded success in this, as is the case with the moment of Friday. Indeed, Friday was the day on which God the Sublime created Adam—peace be upon him! The only religious community to be afforded success with it was this noble religious community. It was offered to the Jews but they chose Saturday, and it was offered to the Christians but they chose Sunday. God the Sublime gave us success with it—through His grace and His generosity! But God knows best!

[9]

(23) And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the origin of the moment of Friday. He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Its origin is that when God the Sublime finished the creation of things—and that was during the last moment of Friday—all creatures gathered together to beseech and call upon God the Sublime to complete the blessing to their bodies and bestow on them what would be a cause of their persistence and their well-being—along with His approval of them and the absence of His anger.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'If a person receives illumination about the moment of Friday and has success with it, he must raise up this form of supplication and ask God the Sublime for good in this world as well as good in the hereafter. For this is what came forth from the interior of the created beings on that day, and their supplication wasn't exclusively concerned with the hereafter. So if a person is afforded success with the said moment and he makes the above-mentioned supplication correspond to the moment, his wish will be attained.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This very brief moment is actually the amount of an inclination in ritual prayer done with its [proper] composure, namely the amount [of time] for each part of the body of the person in motion to return to its place and grow calm there, and for his veins and his limbs to grow calm after the motion arising from the previous movement.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And this moment moves about but it's special to the day of Friday. Sometimes it occurs before midday and moves its moment, and sometimes it's at midday and after that it goes on moving its moments until the setting of the sun.' And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'It remains before midday for six months and after midday for six months.'

Another time I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'In the time of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—it

occurred at the hour when the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—gave his sermon and that was at midday. In the time of our lord ʿUthmān—God be pleased with him—it was moved and it occurred after midday. The time of the sermon became the time when the people gathered for ritual prayers and was devoid of the moment, despite the fact that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—prescribed when the sermon and the gathering were to take place so as to coincide with the moment in question.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'But since the Prophet's rising to his feet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and his standing as a preacher who implores and beseeches God the Sublime isn't equalled by anything else, the time when the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—rose to his feet acquired an awesome honor and abundant light. This time became like the moment of Friday or better. Indeed, whoever has missed the moment of Friday but has been present at the moment of the Prophet's standing—God's blessings and peace be upon him—nothing is lost for him. For this reason the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—didn't order the sermon to be moved to the moment of Friday every time the moment shifted, because his moment—God's blessings and peace be upon him—doesn't shift. Moreover, it's more worthy of esteem than the moment of Friday which shifts because in this—I mean the fact that the sermon doesn't shift—there's kindness toward the noble religious community. Likewise, the matter of the moment of Friday is something supernatural and a secret which only (24) the elite are familiar with. His moment—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is evident and precisely defined as at midday. It isn't concealed from anyone. And it was more worthy of esteem. In addition, whoever doesn't perform the ritual prayers at midday but has made it his habit to perform them later has surely abandoned the moment of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! They're in doubt as far as attaining the moment of Friday and then they go and squander what's certain for what's in doubt. This is an awesome abandonment. We ask God for success in following the course the Prophet followed—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

Then I said: 'We're in the Maghrib. If we deliver a sermon at midday and wish to make it coincide with his moment—God's blessings and peace be upon him—we won't attain this because our midday arrives much later than midday in Medina. For us it's necessary to seek his moment—blessings and peace be upon him—



before midday, and this would lead to the Friday ritual prayers being held before midday. But this isn't allowed. So what's the remedy?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The secret of his moment—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is effective in all middays universally. It isn't that one midday is authoritative to the exclusion of another, just as one sunset isn't authoritative to the exclusion of another, nor one sunrise to the exclusion of another. But the sunrise of every country is authoritative as is the sunset of every locality. Indeed, we perform the morning prayers at our dawn and not at dawn in Medina the Illuminated. And we break the fast at our sunset, not at sunset in Medina. The same holds for all the prescriptions to do with fixed times, and among these is midday.'

Then I questioned the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and asked him to explain to me the nature of the moment's shifting and the manner of its moving by degrees. How did it occur at the last moment of Friday but then move backwards little by little until it reached midday? Next, how did it shift further until it was before midday and had advanced to the beginning of the day? [Finally,] how did it come to return to its starting point, so it was back at the end of the day? And this despite its previously mentioned secret requiring it not to move. Likewise, the secret of the Night of Power requires it not to move. Just as the moment of the final third of the night doesn't move which is the moment of the Prophet's birth—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Moreover, the moment of Friday is extremely brief. So how can it cover [the period] from the setting of the sun to midday in six months and in another six months cover from midday to the rising of the sun—unless, by God, the moment is quite sizeable?

And he replied—God be pleased with him: 'It's forbidden to explain what you've asked about.'

(25) I, al-Lamaʿī, would like to cite the *ḥadīths* that corroborate the Shaykh's words—God be pleased with him—and indicate that what he said has been transmitted [in Tradition]. As for his saying that this religious community and none other was afforded success with the moment of Friday, the proof of it is what Muslim has published from Abū Hurayra: 'The Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "We who were the last will be the first on the Day of Resurrection. And we'll be the first to enter Paradise, though they were given the book before us and we were given it after them. They were in disagreement but God guided us to the truth that they disagreed about. And this day of theirs that they disagreed about, God guided us to it." And he said: "The day of Friday. This is our

day. The next day is for the Jews and the one after that for the Christians.”<sup>10</sup>

As for his saying that it shifts and is very brief, the proof of this is what Abū Dāwūd has published from Abū Hurayra: ‘The Apostle of God said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “The best day on which the sun rises is Friday. On that day Adam was created and on it he was sent down [from Paradise], on it he was forgiven [by God] and on it he died, and on it the Resurrection will occur, nor is there any animal that doesn’t harken at evening twilight on Friday to the hour except for the Jinn and mankind. And on Friday is a moment which, if a Muslim bondsman chances upon it while performing the ritual prayers and requests something from God, God will grant him his request.”’ And Muslim says in his *Ṣaḥīḥ*: ‘On Friday Adam was created, on that day he was led into Paradise, and on it he was cast forth from Paradise.’ He also says on the matter of the moment: ‘It’s a short moment.’ And he says: ‘Any Muslim who performs the ritual prayers at this moment [and asks God for something, God will confer it on him.]’<sup>11</sup>

And concerning its time Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj relates in the *ḥadīth* of Abū Mūsā:<sup>12</sup> ‘I heard the Apostle of God say—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Between when the imam sits down and the ritual prayer is finished.”’<sup>13</sup> ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq<sup>14</sup> says: ‘The only chain of transmission he gives is Makhrama b. Bukayr<sup>15</sup>—from his father<sup>16</sup>—from Abū Burda<sup>17</sup>—from Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī.’ And a group transmitted it from Abū Burda—from Abū Mūsā, that is they presented it as the words of Abū (26) Mūsā, not as the words of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Hence it’s a *ḥadīth* with an incomplete chain of transmission (*mawqūf*), not one that’s been traced back to the Prophet. ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq and others say: ‘Makhrama didn’t hear it from his father but transmits it from his father’s books.’ And Abū Dāwūd reports, transmitting from Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh—from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who said: ‘Friday consists of twelve [separate] moments. Any Muslim bondsman who asks God the Sublime for something, God

<sup>10</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 135.

<sup>11</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 135.

<sup>12</sup> See EI, s.n. al-Ash‘arī, Abū Mūsā; probably died 42/662.

<sup>13</sup> *Concordance* V, p. 410.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. ‘Ibriziana’, p. 137, LIV; see ftn. 19 below.

<sup>15</sup> TT X, p. 70, no. 120; died 159/775-76.

<sup>16</sup> TT I, pp. 491 f., no. 908; died 117-122/735-39.

<sup>17</sup> TT XII, p. 18, no. 95; the son of Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī; died 104-107/722-

will confer it on him. Make your request at the last moment after the afternoon prayers.<sup>18</sup> °Abd al-Ḥaqq<sup>19</sup> says: 'In its chain of transmission is Jallāh,<sup>20</sup> the *mawlā* of °Abd al-°Azīz b. Marwān.'<sup>21</sup> And Abū °Umar b. °Abd al-Barr<sup>22</sup> mentions it as a *ḥadīth* of °Abd al-Salām b. Ḥafṣ<sup>23</sup>—he's also called Ibn Muṣ'ab<sup>24</sup>—from al-°Alā' b. °Abd al-Raḥmān<sup>25</sup>—from his father—from Abū Hurayra who reported: 'The Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "The moment when the prayer of supplication is to be pursued on Friday is the last moment of Friday."' He adds: '°Abd al-Salām is a trustworthy authority of Medina.' And Ibn Ma°īn<sup>26</sup> says the same about him or perhaps Abū °Umar relates this about him. Consult °Abd al-Ḥaqq in *al-Aḥkām al-kubrā*.<sup>27</sup> And consult Ibn Ḥajar in the *Fath* [*al-bārī*].<sup>28</sup> In this work Ibn Ḥajar recounts forty-one views. He mentions arguments for them and counter-arguments against them, and expatiates on this at length. He gives the origin of every one of the views and cites the *ḥadīths* which present evidence for them. Likewise, he explains which of them are sound (*ṣaḥīḥ*) and which of them are weak (*ḍa'īf*) or have incomplete chains of transmission, etc.

When I'd examined and memorized all these views and understood their arguments, I spoke with the Shaykh about the moment in question—God be pleased with him! I then heard secrets from him, some of which I've written down. And they're what's been presented above. May God confer benefit by means of it—amen! But now let's return to what I heard from him concerning the Dīwān. And so I've the following to report:

## [10]

I heard al-Dabbāgh say—God be pleased with him: 'The language of the people of the Dīwān—God be pleased with them—is Syriac because of its conciseness and its combining numerous meanings, and also because the spirits and the angels attend the Dīwān and Syriac is their language. They only speak Arabic if the Prophet—

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18 *Concordance* I, p. 368.

19 On °Abd al-Ḥaqq see 'Ibrīziana', p. 137, LIV; died 581/1185.

20 Unidentified; it may be erroneously transcribed.

21 See EI s.n.; died 85/704.

22 See p. 230, ftn. 41.

23 TT VI, pp. 317 f., no. 612.

24 Text has the incorrect form *M°qib*.

25 *Mizān* III, pp. 102 f., no. 5735.

26 GAS I, pp. 106 f.; died 233/847.

27 Cf. ftns. 14 and 19 above.

28 *Fath* III, pp. 81-90.

God's blessings and peace be upon him—is present out of politeness toward him.' And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Not everyone who attends the Dīwān from among the Friends of God has the capacity to look at the Well-guarded Tablet (*al-lawḥ al-mahfūz*). Rather there are some among them who can look at it, whereas there are others who turn to it with their deeper vision (*baṣīra*) but are unfamiliar with what it contains. And there are some who don't turn toward it because they know they aren't among the people who can see it.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'As with the new moon, people's ability to see it varies.'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If the Friends of God come together in the Dīwān—(27) God be pleased with them—they provide help to one another. Then you see lights exit and enter and penetrate among them like arrows. When the Friends disperse, it's only after acquiring immense [spiritual] increase.'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The small among the Friends of God attends the Dīwān in his body, whereas the great Friend has no hindrance upon him.' By this he means—God be pleased with him—that the small Friend when attending the Dīwān is absent from his locality and his house, and isn't to be found at all in his town because he goes to the Dīwān in his body. As for the great Friend, he arranges things as he wishes. He attends the Dīwān but isn't absent from his house because the great Friend is able to take on any appearance he wants and due to the perfection of his spirit, if he so wishes, three hundred and sixty-six bodies can be devised for him. Indeed, one time when I was with him outside the Bāb al-Jīsa, one of the gates of Fez—God watch over the city—I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'What's this Dīwān? The Friends of God who constitute it are all in my breast!' And one time I heard him say: 'The Dīwān actually convenes in my breast.'

And I heard him say on another occasion—God be pleased with him: 'In comparison with me the heavens and the earths are like a *mawzūna* in a desert area of the land.' These words and similar things came forth from him when we witnessed a heightened state (*ziyāda*)<sup>29</sup> in him and yet he was always in a heightened state—God be pleased with him!

One day I was with him outside the Bāb al-Futūḥ and he began to name for me the great among the godly men—and this despite his

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<sup>29</sup> On the relationship between *ziyāda* and beholding God cf. ThG IV, p. 413; and see here Chapter Eleven, p. 896, on the paradise known as the House of Increase (*dār al-mazīd*) where the only pleasure is beholding God.

being formally unschooled. I then asked: 'How do you know them?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The spirits of those who've received the great illumination have their abode in the dome of Barzakh. Anyone we've seen in the dome, we know he's one of the great.' Then we turned to speaking about the shaykh Sayyidī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī. Al-Dabbāgh said: 'He's one of (28) the great.' I began mentioning his glorious feats and the marvels recounted among his miracles. Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'Though Sayyidī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī—God be pleased with him—lived from his time up to our day and age, he wouldn't attain the spiritual stations of your brother 'Abd al-°Azīz'—he was referring to himself—'nor would he advance as much as 'Abd al-°Azīz has advanced from yesterday to today. By God, your brother doesn't say this out of pride but he says it as an acknowledgement and by way of informing you about God's favor!'

And one day I was entering through the Bāb al-Jīsa with him when he looked at me and said: 'At this moment I'm wearing three garments. If one of them were removed and placed over the city of Fez, everyone in the city would dissolve and its wall and foundations, its houses and everyone in them, would return to absolute non-existence.'

And one day I was entering through the Bāb al-Futūḥ with him and I asked him about the names of God the Sublime and their number, and about the fact that someone among the religious scholars says they come to four thousand.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'In the instant of an eye's opening and closing I witness names of God the Sublime which exceed one hundred thousand. And every instant this goes on increasing without interruption.'

[11]

But let's return to what we're presently engaged in, for this is an unfathomable ocean and we find ourself on the shore of wishful desire, scooping up as much as possible from the Shaykh's oceans [of knowledge]—God be pleased with him! And so we have the following to report:

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The Support may be absent from the Dīwān and not attend it. Then what causes disagreement occurs among the Friends of God the Sublime who belong to the people of the Dīwān. Action takes place on their part that causes them to kill one another. For if most of them have chosen something and a minority opposes this, then the action referred to befalls the minority and they all die. One day they disagreed about

(29) something. The small group among them said: "If this thing doesn't happen, we wish to die." The bigger group replied: "So die, if you wish!" The small group then died.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'If the two factions are equal, the action befalls both of them together.'

I said: 'But they're people of deeper vision (*baṣīra*) and unveiling. Why does strife occur among them? After all, they behold the wish of God the Sublime by means of their deeper vision.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'If it's the smaller group that's in opposition, God veils them from His wish so that what's been divinely decreed happens to them. If the two factions are equal, the wish of the True—He is exalted—is concealed from all of them. For the hearts of the pure Friends of God are places where divine decrees manifest themselves, but hearts can be in disagreement and hearts can be equally matched.'

And I asked: 'What's the cause of the Support's absence—God be pleased with him—from the Dīwān?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The cause is one of two things. Either his absence is because of beholding the True—He is exalted—during the entire day so that the worlds disappear from his sight and for this reason he isn't present in the Dīwān, or because he's just begun to hold his office, as is the case close to the time of death of the Support who preceded him. He may not be present at the beginning so that his body can accustom itself by stages.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And the chief of existence may be present during the Support's absence. The people of the Dīwān then experience such fear and anxiety that they lose their wits, since they don't know what the outcome of his presence will be—God's blessings and peace be upon him! If this situation were to continue for many days, the world would be destroyed.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'If the chief of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is present during the Support's absence, present with him as well are Abū Bakr and ʿUmar, ʿUthmān and ʿAlī, Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, and their mother Fāṭima the Radiant, sometimes all of them and other times only some of them—God be pleased with them one and all!'<sup>30</sup>

(30) He said: 'Our mistress Fāṭima sits with the group of women who are present in the Dīwān, on the left side as already mentioned. Our mistress Fāṭima is in front of them—God be pleased with her and with them!' He said—God be pleased with him: 'And one night

<sup>30</sup> From: 'And the chief of existence may be present...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 202, l. -4 to p. 203, l. 1.

I heard her—God be pleased with her—invoke blessings on her father—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! She said: “Oh God, bless him whose spirit is the prayer niche of the spirits, the angels and the universe! Oh God, bless him who’s the prayer leader of the prophets and the apostles! Oh God, bless him who’s the prayer leader of the people of Paradise, God’s believing bondsmen!” She was invoking blessings on him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—in Syriac<sup>31</sup> and not with these words, for I’ve extracted the meaning from them.<sup>32</sup> But God knows best!’

Then I said: ‘If the Support is present, can anyone contradict him?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘No one can so much as move his lower lip in contradiction, let alone openly voice a contradiction. Indeed, if he did so, he’d be afraid of having his faith stripped from him, not to speak of other things. But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘When the people of the Dīwān gather together in the Dīwān, they agree on what will happen from that time up to the same time the following day. And they discuss—God be pleased with them—God the Sublime’s decree concerning the coming day and the night that follows it.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘They have the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) in all worlds, the sublunar as well as the translunar, even in the Seventy Veils and even in the world of Raqqā<sup>33</sup>—written with *rā*’ and a doubled *qāf*. Raqqā is located above the Seventy Veils. They’re the ones who have the power to act in it and power over its people, over their thoughts and what suddenly occurs in their hearts. Indeed, nothing suddenly enters their thought except by permission of the people of the power of free disposal (*ahl al-taṣarruf*)—God be pleased with them one and all! Now if this is the case with the world of Raqqā, which is above the Seventy Veils which in turn is above God’s Celestial Throne, then how do you think matters stand with regard to the other worlds?’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the men of the Makhzan had arrested the son of one of my companions. Moreover, the Makhzan was looking for him and he was fearful of them. The father was certain, when they arrested his son, that they were going to kill him. He came to me and I then went to the Shaykh—(31) God be pleased with him!

<sup>31</sup> On Syriac see pp. 406 ff.

<sup>32</sup> From: ‘He said: “Our mistress Fāṭima sits...”’ cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 203, ll. 1-4. After the *taṣliya* the text of al-Ḥājj ‘Umar has: *lākin lā bi-hādhā ‘l-lafẓ wa-innamā ana istakhartu* (instead of *istakhrāju*) *ma‘nāhu*...

<sup>33</sup> ‘Lehrer’, p. 123.

I stirred the Shaykh's interest and spoke to him about the son. He said—God be pleased with him: 'If you think the cat devours the mouse without a certain person's permission'—he meant himself—'then your opinion is worthless. Don't be afraid for the son. And tell his father to set his mind at ease.' And this is how the matter turned out. When the father went before the Makhzan, they released the son without any reason.

And he used to say—God be pleased with him: 'If you want some wish to be fulfilled for yourself or for someone else, tell it to me and do nothing more. That is to say, don't long for its fulfilment and worry about it. That will only cause it not to be fulfilled.' And this is how the matter was. Whenever a need arose, if we mentioned it to him and then were silent, a happy outcome would quickly follow. If we worried and were concerned about it, the door of fulfilment would close shut. But God knows best!

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether the Dīwān occurs anywhere else besides the Cave of Hirā<sup>3</sup>.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, it does. Once during the year, but not otherwise, it occurs somewhere else. This place is called Zāwiyat Asā—with *a* on the *hamza* and the *sīn* followed by *alif*—outside the land of Sūs, between Sūs and the land of Western Sudan. The Friends of God of the Sudan attend it and among them are those who only attend the Dīwān on that night. God the Sublime allows this and conducts the people of all the horizons of these lands and they assemble in the said place one or two days before the night in question as well as afterwards. And an immense quantity of gold dust is brought together in this market.'

And I asked: 'Does the Dīwān convene anywhere else besides these two places?'

He replied: 'Yes, they do convene somewhere besides the two places mentioned but only about ten of them. This is because the earth can't support them since God the Sublime wants them to be scattered across the earth and among mankind. But God the Sublime knows best!'

[12]

(32) And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether those drawn unto God (*al-majādhīb*)<sup>34</sup> are admitted to the Dīwān and

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<sup>34</sup> A *majdhūb* (pl. *majādhīb*) is someone who attains divine proximity by being straightway drawn up to God, i.e. without 'travelling the mystic path' and passing through the usual spiritual halting-stations. But as a result of this he's considered to have lost his reason.



whether they have the power of free disposal as do those who aren't drawn unto God.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'They aren't admitted to the Diwān and power of free disposal isn't in their hands. If they're accorded the power of free disposal, the people at large will perish.'

I asked: 'When will it be accorded them?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'At the time when the Anti-Christ (al-Dajjāl)<sup>35</sup> appears—God curse him! The power of free disposal will then be in their hands and the chief of the Diwān will be one of them. He won't possess reason so as to exercise discernment, and thus defects will affect the power of free disposal. This will be a cause for the emergence of the Anti-Christ.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that I heard a story from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—which contains words about those who are drawn unto God and about their rules. And the story contains other benefits as well, so let's record it in full.

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Sayyidī Ḥammād al-Majdhūb was from the people of the Maghrib—God be pleased with him! He used to beg in the marketplace in Cairo and ask for something to eat. It was a time of high prices. Once while approaching the shop of a man to beg and ask for something for food, he suddenly had an interior vision. He beheld a great amount of gold in a large jar which was buried in front of the shop of the man he was approaching.' Al-Dabbāgh related: 'The shopkeeper in question was one of the knowers of God. He observed Sayyidī Ḥammād coming toward him and wanted to test him. When Sayyidī Ḥammād asked him for something, the man told him: "God will provide for you." Sayyidī Ḥammād repeated his request and the man repeated his reply. Then the man thought: "If this is Sayyidī Ḥammād, I'll put him to a test", and he said to Sayyidī Ḥammād: "You're begging, whereas what's right under your foot is sufficient for you." The man was referring to the buried gold. Indeed, when Sayyidī Ḥammād came near the door, he halted at the very spot where the gold was buried. (33) Sayyidī Ḥammād replied: "What's under my foot is gold, but I'm begging for half a piece of silver to feed myself with." The man thereby perceived his state and gave him ten half pieces of silver. Sayyidī Ḥammād then went off.'

I asked: 'What was the cause that the man knew Sayyidī Ḥammād before he met him and then wanted to test him?'

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Dajjāl: the Impostor or Anti-Christ who will appear at the end of time when extreme moral depravity and chaotic violence have engulfed the world. Cf. EQ, s.n. Antichrist.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘His knowing him before he met him is like the case of someone who’s asleep, in a state of sleep that’s near to waking. While asleep he beholds a man of such-and-such a description. Then he wakes up. And behold, the man is standing there before him. He now looks him over to see whether or not he’s the one he saw in his sleep. This way no doubt remains. He knows that what he sees while awake is what he saw in sleep—the sleep that was like being awake.’

Then I asked: ‘Why did he first say: “God will provide for you” and only when he perceived his Friendship with God, did he then give him what he asked for and even more? If the gift is for God’s sake—He is mighty and glorious—one shouldn’t consider whether or not the recipient is a Friend. Indeed, the Lord of the two of them is One—He is exalted! If the gift is for other than God’s sake, it isn’t in accordance with the state of the knowers of God—God be pleased with them! Since he refused him the gift to begin with, it was right for him to refuse a second time, if the refusal was for God’s sake. Similarly, since he gave him the gift the second time, it was right for him to give it to him the first time, if the gift was for God’s sake—He is mighty and glorious!’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The believer has one right which is the right of the faith and the Friend of God has two rights, the right of the faith and the right of knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious! When at first he said: “God will provide for you”, he said this because he—the person begging—was one of the believers and he refused him because the right of faith didn’t include a portion of his wealth at that moment. When he then tested him and realized he was a knower of God, the person’s situation was confirmed and his right increased. Now it included a portion of his wealth because of the knowledge of God which they both shared. The characteristic of knowledge of God the Sublime is like the bonds of brotherhood between those who associate as brothers in God—He is mighty and glorious! To refuse at first for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious—and then to give the gift the second time for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious—is like a man who’s asked for something by a beggar from behind a door and the man says: “God will provide for you.” Then he opens the door and behold, the beggar is a brother to the man being asked. Once he knows he’s his brother, it’s his duty not to treat the beggar as a stranger and not to refuse him, (34) as he refused him when he didn’t know this. Refusal would contradict brotherhood and what it requires based on the relation of kinship.’

Then I asked: 'What's the portion that knowledge of God (*ma'rifa*) requires from the wealth of someone who's asked?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It's what the bond of brotherhood in God the Sublime imposes as a duty. If you have only one brother in God, he has a right to half your wealth. If you have nine brothers, each one has a right to one-tenth of your wealth.'

I asked: 'But why does he give him one-tenth instead of half his wealth?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The beggar who's a knower of God isn't limited to this beggar. Perhaps another knower of God will come to him after the first one departs, and then a third and a fourth, and so on. What constitutes a man's "ship" is distributing the portion he owes his brothers in God—He is mighty and glorious!'

I said: 'And what was Sayyidī Hammād?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'He was one of those drawn unto God. And the man he approached whose name was Sayyidī Ibrāhīm was a traveller on the path (*sālik*).<sup>36</sup> Each of them was among the knowers of God—God be pleased with them both!'

[13]

And I asked: 'What's the difference then between the person drawn unto God and the traveller on the path, given that they both share in knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious—?'

He replied—God be pleased with him. 'A person drawn unto God is someone whose exterior is affected by what he sees, and what he observes delights him. He imitates it in his exterior and complies with it in what he does and what he omits to do. If God the Sublime has mercy on a person and opens his deeper vision, he continuously beholds marvels of the Heavenly Assembly (the angels) beyond what can be described and supported. If this is a person drawn unto God, in his exterior he complies with what he sees through his deeper vision and what he sees through his deeper vision knows no limit. For this reason his state isn't subject to restraint. If you see someone among those drawn unto God who sways back and forth to music, he's absent in his vision (*mushāhada*) of the virgins of Paradise (*al-ḥūr al-ʿīn*), for this is the manner of their movements. His exterior is engaged in imitating what he observes of their affair.

<sup>36</sup> In older Sufism the *sālik* is the opposite of the *majdhūb*. The first is the traveller on the mystic path, the second a person drawn up to God without undergoing the difficulties of 'the path'. Cf. Gramlich, *Derwischorden* II, pp. 189-94; Meier, *Kubrā*, pp. 24 ff. and 95 f.; and *Concept of Sainthood*, p. 124. For later centuries also see Geoffroy, *Le Soufisme*, pp. 309-33.

As for the traveller on the path, he's a person whose exterior isn't affected by what he sees and he doesn't imitate any (35) of the movements he observes. Rather he's an abounding, tranquil ocean upon which nothing appears. He's more perfect than someone drawn unto God and his reward is greater by one third than the reward of someone drawn unto God. This is because the traveller on the path follows in the footsteps of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the Prophet's exterior—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was never affected by anything. Hence you see the travellers on the path in possession of their wits (*'uqūl*), whereas for the most part those drawn unto God aren't in possession of their wits. Such is the case because if their exterior engages in imitating the exterior of others, their exterior as it was in their original nature before illumination becomes lost, and as a consequence of this their wits become lost as well.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'One of the travellers on the path among the Friends of God—God be pleased with him—was present in the Dīwān and he was one of the great men. He had a son from his own loins and knew he'd be his heir. But he didn't know whether he'd turn out to be someone drawn unto God or a traveller on the path. One time he carried him on his shoulders and walked with him until he brought him into the midst of the people of the Dīwān where the Dīwān is located. They exclaimed: "Oh So-and-so, what's this? You know it's not allowed for someone who isn't one of 'the people of the footstep'<sup>37</sup> to be conveyed by means of the [supernatural] footstep." He said to them: "I ask your pardon and forgiveness, and your indulgence." Then he went before the Support—God be pleased with him—and said to him: "Oh Sayyidī, I've come to you and this noble gathering. By your sanctity and the sanctity of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and by this gathering of his, inform me about my son's situation, whether he'll be one of those drawn unto God or a traveller on the path."

The Support replied to him: "This is a matter that can't be known. The very same light of faith that's in the traveller on the path is in the person drawn unto God. The same knowledge of God that's in the one is in the other. The difference between them with regard to good deeds and ranks is hidden from us. It will only be known in the hereafter. So by what stratagem can one know whether this son of

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37 *ahl al-khuṭwa*: unidentified term.

yours is someone drawn unto God or a traveller on the path? This is impossible."

He then said to the Support—God be pleased with him: "Oh Sayyidi, God hasn't made you a Support without your knowing this and more!" After that he beseeched him by the rank of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—to explain to him the situation the boy would end up in, whether it would be to travel the path or to become drawn unto God.

The Support said—God be pleased with him: "Bring me a piece of wood." They brought him a piece of wood. He said: "Is there a knife?" They brought him a knife. He said to the boy: "Come closer!" The boy drew closer until the Support had him sit down in front of him. The Support then began to whittle the piece of wood with the knife and the boy looked on. The Support—God be pleased with him—set about whittling and making notches in the wood. One moment he would bite his tongue, another moment his lips. In the meantime he watched the boy. And behold, the boy bit his tongue, if the Support—God be pleased with him—bit his tongue, and he bit his lips if the Support—God be pleased with him—bit his lips. Then the Support said to the man: "Take your son! (36) He will turn out to be drawn unto God."

[The father] exclaimed: "Oh Sayyidi, how can you know this?"

He replied: "His exterior is affected by what he sees and observes."

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Travellers on the path avoid those drawn unto God when it comes to certain things. For instance, a traveller on the path won't eat with someone drawn unto God because the latter has no concern for what passes over his tongue in the way of curses and suchlike. It's the duty of the traveller on the path to be on guard against this from him. And another thing is that he won't make journeys with him for this reason. Another is that he won't wear his clothing because someone drawn unto God doesn't guard against uncleanness. And another is that it isn't allowed for the traveller on the path to marry a woman drawn unto God and the same is true the other way round.

When it comes to a shaykh (spiritual master), the person drawn unto God may be educated under a traveller on the path, as in the story about the boy, for he was drawn unto God, whereas his father was a traveller on the path. And the traveller on the path may be educated under someone who's drawn unto God, as was the case

with Sayyidi Yūsuf al-Fāsi.<sup>38</sup> He was a traveller on the path, whereas his shaykh, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Majdhūb,<sup>39</sup> was drawn unto God.’

I asked: ‘But how can this be since the person drawn unto God is distracted from himself? So how can he pay attention to someone else and be engaged in his spiritual training (*tarbiya*)?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Being drawn unto God differs with regard to intensity and weakness. Some experience this to a small degree and others experience it intensely such that they don’t come back to their senses. But God knows best!’

[14]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The Friends of God undertake some awesome things, things which God the Sublime imposes on them—such that one is astonished by these actions. But if you look with the eye of reality, you’ll find that the doer of the actions is the True—He is exalted! The Friends, no differently than any of the other created beings, are carried [by God].’

And I asked: ‘The Friends of God—God be pleased with them—see the actions of the True—He is exalted—and if they see His actions—He is sublime—then how can they see action as arising from themselves or how can they attribute it to their bodies?’

(37) He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Friends and anyone else God the Sublime has honored do see His actions in others—He is exalted—but no one among God the Sublime’s creatures sees God’s actions in his own body. If he did behold Lordly actions in his body, his body would dissolve and melt away. A created being is able to see the actions of the True—He is exalted—through intermediaries and in a body other than its own. As for doing so directly in its own body, it isn’t able to sustain this. A created being isn’t capable of seeing the Agent in its own body. That’s why God the Sublime created intermediaries and made the angels into vessels in which His actions appear so that created beings don’t dissolve. The angels have this ability because their bodies are pure lights. Their bodies aren’t earthen masses.

And know that the angels possess a special capacity to serve as intermediaries with regard to action and no one else possesses it. Hence if after receiving illumination you look, you’ll find that none of the places where created beings are found is without angels. You’ll see them in the Veils and below the Veils, in the Celestial Throne and below it, in Paradise and in Hell, in the sky and on the earth, in the caves and the mountains, and in the rivers and all the

<sup>38</sup> Probably the person in *Nashr al-mathānī* I, p. 119; died 1013/1604.

<sup>39</sup> Probably al-Munāwī, *Kaw. III*, p. 388, no. 789; died 944/1537.

oceans.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Because of this benefit that occurs through their serving as intermediaries between creation and the True—He is exalted—belief in them is obligatory, whereas this isn't the case when it comes to other awesome existing things such as the Veils and so on. But God knows best!'

[15]

One day while speaking with al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—I made mention of our lord Solomon—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—and the Jinn and the human beings, the demons and the wind, that God made subservient to him. And I mentioned what God the Sublime bestowed on Solomon's father, our lord David—peace be upon him—in the way of working iron and rendering it soft so that in his hands it was like lumps of dough, and the power God bestowed on our lord Jesus—peace be upon him—to cure the blind and lepers, and to bring to life the dead by God the Sublime's permission, and similar things among the evidentiary miracles of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them! (38) He understood this as if I were saying to him: 'The chief of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is above all of them. Why didn't something like this appear on his part? Of course, some evidentiary miracles did appear on his part but they were of a different kind.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Everything that was bestowed on Solomon in his dominion—peace be upon him—and what was made subservient to David and conferred on Jesus—peace be upon him—this and more God the Sublime has bestowed on the people of the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) in the Prophet's religious community—God's blessings and peace be upon him! God made subservient to them the Jinn, human kind, the demons, the wind and the angels, indeed everything found in all the worlds. He gave them the power to heal the blind and lepers, and to bring the dead back to life. But this is a hidden, veiled matter which isn't visible to men at large lest they devote themselves to these beings and forget their Lord—He is mighty and glorious! And this came about for the people of the power of free disposal thanks to the blessing of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! All of this is due to his evidentiary miracles—blessings and peace be upon him!' He then recounted secrets which minds are incapable of supporting. But God the Sublime knows best!

[16]

And one day I questioned him—God be pleased with him—saying: 'The people of the power of free disposal—God be pleased

with them—have the capacity to destroy the infidels wherever they may be, so why do they leave them in their unbelief and their worship of something other than God—He is mighty and glorious—since whoever is of this description should quite rightly be destroyed?’

He replied—God be pleased with him—tilting his head upward and bringing it down again: ‘In [the space of] this instant the Friend of God is able to destroy this entire land. None the less, if he’s present at a battle between the Muslims and the infidels, it’s forbidden for him to make any use at all of this secret against the infidels. He fights against them in the usual way of fighting, by striking with a sword and thrusting with a lance, etc., and thereby conforms to the example of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘A ship of the Muslims which had aboard two Friends of God—He is mighty and glorious—encountered a ship of the infidels. When the fighting between them grew intense, one of the two Friends of God stood up—he was the lesser—and made use of this secret against the [enemy] ship. Fire broke out in the ship of the infidels and they beheld this. No usual cause emerged from the Friend of God which covered up his power of free disposal. Indeed, the ship caught fire without any cause. When this Friend of God did what he did, the other Friend who was with him divested him [of his power]—and he was greater than him—as a punishment for what he’d done.’

(39) Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘It isn’t permitted to make use of this secret against the infidels—God destroy them—because in reality the person who possesses the secret in that situation is outside the world of human beings and is engaged in another world. And just as it isn’t permitted for the world of the angels, for instance, to make use of the extent of their power against the infidels, similarly it isn’t permitted for the possessor of the secret to make use of his power against them. Rather the matters that assure their persistence and the continuation of their life occur for them through his hands, just as they have protectors from among the angels who order their affairs from their birth up to when they die.

In short, the infidels—God destroy them—are of the world of human beings and nothing is used in fighting with them and destroying them except what’s usual in the world of human beings. But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘One day a certain Christian girl—God curse the Christians—looked at the



moon and, being a little child, she said to her father: "Oh my father, who created this?" Her father pointed to a cross in the ground and said: "This did." The girl, lifting up the cross as high as she could, released it in the air and it fell to the ground. Then she said: "Oh my father, if it couldn't hold itself up this small amount, who held it so it could create the moon in its lofty height and elevation?" Thereupon her father cursed at her.'

I asked: 'Was the girl a Muslim?'

He replied: 'No.'

Then I asked: 'Did she become a Muslim after that?'

He replied: 'No.'

And I asked: 'So where did she get this true objection from, and the clear shining light?'

He replied: 'One of the people of truth was on hand. He looked at her and then she spoke. But God knows best!'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that the person who was on hand was the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and the look he directed at her was an interior look. However, it was veiled from their eyes—God be pleased with him! But God knows best!

[17]

And I asked him—God be pleased with him: 'If the Friend of God assumes a form which is other than his own and he's killed in that form, then who suffers the pain? Is it his spirit in the original body, or the one whose form he took on?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'What one must believe is that the two [forms of] pain in this world and the world to come are the same. People at large don't have knowledge of this because they think that what's meant by pain is the body but this isn't the case. What's meant is the spirit. Then he recounted a secret from among God the Sublime's secrets which he used to explain this (40) and presented evidence concerning the matter, namely that if God puts a Friend to work in a place that his earthen body can't support because of a hindrance such as intense heat or intense cold, etc., then the Friend's spirit emerges from his body and enters a body that's able to support the hindrance in question and it undertakes the matter.' He said: 'If the person transferred to the body suffers pain, he feels the pain the same as if his spirit was in its own body and no differently.'

Then I asked: 'What are these bodies which the Friend can enter and be transferred to?' He replied: 'For instance, the camel, the bull, and so on, which are able to support the hindrance in question.'

I said: 'Their spirits are in their bodies so how can the spirit of the Friend of God enter with them?'

He replied: 'Though their spirits are in their bodies, they aren't like the spirits of Adam's offspring. Indeed, the spirits of animals are like their minds, and their minds are like their spirits. That's why the Friend of God can adopt the form of the body of animals. If he wishes to carry out something that's been divinely decreed, he relies on this and he doesn't adopt the form of bodies of Adam's offspring which contain their spirits.'

And I said: 'On certain occasions we see a bull, for example, that's in no way disturbed. Then something comes over it. Having become aroused, it hurls itself at someone and kills him. Is it possible a Friend of God took on its body so that what was divinely decreed came to pass?'

He replied: 'This is possible if the person who was killed was an infidel, because the army of light and the army of darkness are engaged in an intense struggle.' Then I asked: 'And is it possible that animals such as the cat and the dog whose form demons can adopt are used the same way?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, it is. Demons belong to darkness and falsehood, whereas the Friends of God—God be pleased with them—belong to the truth. Now light and darkness are two armies. As for the said animals, sometimes the one army takes on their form and sometimes the other army takes on their form—in order to carry out a divine decree.'

(41) And I asked: 'What divine decree relies on the Friend of God adopting the form of the snake?'

He replied: 'If God orders him to kill Zayd with poison, the Friend's spirit will then enter the said form in order to carry out the divine decree.'

I said: 'So there's no poison in the spirit of the Friend of God?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Whatever may be the poison, it's the will (*himma*) and the resolve of the Friend of God that causes things to be done? Thus if he wills something, it happens.'

And I asked al-Dabbāgh what the situation of the Friend's body is if his spirit leaves his body.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It remains without a spirit. If he's one of the lesser Friends of God, his body remains in the form of someone who's dazed and insane. He doesn't speak at all. If he does speak, he doesn't comprehend what he says and doesn't understand it. But if he's one of the great Friends, his body remains in a state as if its spirit were still in it. He speaks and he laughs just as he was in his former state.'

Then I said: 'But if it remains without a spirit, it's dead. So how is it possible for the first to be left with the appearance of an insane person and for the second to be left in his normal state, while the spirit of both of them has departed?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'If the spirit departs, its effects remain in the body, such as heat and similar things. As long as the effects are in the body, it will remain alive, and the effects only become non-existent after twenty-four hours.' He said: 'Whoever's spirit returns to his body before that remains in life. If the said period of time elapses and the spirit is still separated from the body, it's impossible for it ever to return to its body, and it's among the number of the dead. How many Friends of God have had their spirit taken [unto God] in this situation! And God has great concern for whoever had his spirit taken in this situation.'

[18]

And I asked him about what I heard concerning a certain Friend of God that his spirit was absent from his body for three days and then returned. Surely this contradicts what was just explained.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'What you heard is true. The spirit can remain absent for seventeen days (42) or more, but it must long for its body. Through its longing the body obtains life.' Then he presented a similitude—God be pleased with him—saying: 'It's like when a man comes to a perilous place and finds a river. He removes his clothes and begins to swim in the water. But while in the water he's afraid for his clothes. So you see him one moment swimming and the next moment raising his head in the direction of his clothes for fear of their being stolen. And it's the same with the spirit. If it leaves the body, it watches the body cautiously the way the swimmer watches his clothes. The swimmer, however, watches cautiously by means of sight alone, whereas because of its agility the spirit's watching entails entering the body. By its watching over the body it's able to enter into it. Then it comes forth in order to accomplish the task it's been charged with and then [again] it watches over the body and enters it. And so it continues until the task is accomplished in three days or more. Nor is there any contradiction between this and what was previously said. But God knows best!'

[19]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The Friend of God who possesses the power of free disposal can extend his hands into the pocket of whomever he wishes and take from it as many

dirhems as he wishes. The person whose pocket it is will have no knowledge of it.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is because the hand the Friend of God takes with is an internal, not an external hand.

Next he told us a story about what happened between one of the Friends of God—God be pleased with them—and the Friend's neighbor. This was that the neighbor had a wife and a man entrusted her with a sum of five *mithqāls*. Then he went off on a military campaign to the region of Fajj,<sup>40</sup> saying: 'If I live, I'll reclaim the money. If I die, give it to my children.' The man who entrusted her with the sum left and then death befell the woman. She gave her final instructions to her husband, the neighbor of the Friend of God, saying: 'If the owner of the money comes, give it to him.' He assented to this. But when she was buried, by way of treachery he took the sum and consumed it. When the owner of the money came, he refused to acknowledge him. Thereupon he set about accumulating and earning until he'd accumulated five *mithqāls* like the previous sum, and he was delighted with it. He came forth from his house and left the Friend of God at the door of the house. The two of them resided in Ra's al-Jinān in the protected city of Fez—God the Sublime watch over it! He eventually came to the market of the candle-makers and bought a candle, intending to take it to the shrine of Sayyidī °Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsi<sup>41</sup>—God give us profit through him! When he was alongside the oven which is in Sab° Luwayyāt,<sup>42</sup> the Friend of God extended his hand from Ra's al-Jinān to the man's pocket, the man being alongside the said oven, and took (43) the five *mithqāls* from him as a punishment for his betraying what he'd been entrusted with. And the man knew nothing at all about this. He then reached the above-mentioned shrine, set down the candle there, and headed up to Ra's al-Jinān.

When his sight fell on the Friend, God inspired him to verify what was in his pocket. He placed his hand in his pocket, didn't find anything, and became angry. He began talking to the Friend and, having no idea he possessed Friendship with God, he exclaimed: 'By God, no Friend remains unto God, neither living nor dead!' The Friend of God laughed so hard he almost fell on the ground. The Friend questioned him, saying: 'Oh uncle °Abd al-Rahmān, what's afflicted you?' He replied to him: 'I went out and I had five *mithqāls*

<sup>40</sup> On Fajj (Figuig) see p. 181, fn. 168.

<sup>41</sup> See p. 162, fn. 140.

<sup>42</sup> A street called the Seven Twists. Not in Le Tourneau, *Fès*, but occurs on modern maps with varying forms of transliteration.

in my pocket. I said to myself: 'I'll buy a candle for Sayyidī °Abd al-Qādir al-Fāsī because I'm so happy with the dirhems.' Thanks to his blessing on my behalf, the bookbinders took them from me.' The Friend of God's laughter only increased.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the Friend of God in question who removed the dirhems from the pocket was the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

And one day in the presence of a group of our companions something similar to this story happened between al-Dabbāgh and the jurist Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Alī al-Majjāwī<sup>43</sup>—God have mercy on him—with *a* on the *mīm* and a doubling of the *jīm*, this being a *nisba* based on Majjāwa, the known tribe of the region of Tāza. What happened was that he came from his homeland with the intention of visiting the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! And the Shaykh came forth to him and to a group of the companions. He sat down with them before the door of his house, leaning against the wall of the house. And Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Alī was leaning against the wall of the house opposite. Between both houses ran the public street. Then the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said to the jurist in question whom he was very fond of: 'Do you have any money with you?' He replied: 'Oh Sayyidī, I have nothing with me.' The Shaykh repeated his question and the jurist gave the same answer—three times. The Shaykh then said: 'Take a look!' In fact, the jurist had eighteen *mawzūnas* in his pocket, wrapped in a piece of cloth. There was nothing he could do but admit it. So he said: 'Oh Sayyidī, eighteen *mawzūnas*.' The Shaykh said: 'Give them here!' He put his hand in his pocket and searched for them but couldn't find anything. He was dumbfounded. The Shaykh laughed—God be pleased with him—and produced them for him in their cloth from underneath him. And he said to him: 'Oh poor Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Alī, if someone is capable of this, how can you plot against him and hide things from him?'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that another miracle appeared to us on the Shaykh's part—God be pleased with him—regarding the jurist. (44) This was that the jurist in question was covetous of worldly goods and very fond of them. God knows how much wealth he possessed and he had no children. When he met the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and God aroused love of him in the jurist's heart, the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—continually ordered him to spend his worldly goods for the sake of God—He is mighty and

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43 Unidentified.

glorious! And the jurist's carnal soul began to engage in this with openhandedness and generosity and he was surprised by this, for he hadn't known his carnal soul to be like that. Eventually the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—demanded even more from him as far as spending his wealth for different good purposes. This made us feel sorry for him so that one of us went and said: 'The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—has placed him under a heavy burden.' But the jurist in question was extremely delighted with this.

Meanwhile, we were unaware of the final outcome, whereas the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was aware of it. In fact, the jurist's appointed hour was approaching and his death was imminent. Thus the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was building palaces for him in Paradise and sending on ahead the wealth he had at his disposal. But we didn't know this. Then when the said jurist's wealth was almost exhausted and only the sum his wife would inherit remained and she'd taken her marriage portion, the jurist passed away—God have mercy on him! And the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—behaved the same way with his venerable friend Sayyidī °Alī b. °Abd Allāh al-Šabbāghī who was mentioned at the beginning of this book.<sup>44</sup> Indeed, from the time al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—first met him, he urged him to spend his worldly wealth for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious! When his worldly wealth was exhausted, he immediately passed away and went before God—He is mighty and glorious!

Just look—God give you success—at the benefit that results from knowing persons like the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The difference between the Friend of God who's endowed with the power of free disposal (*tašarruf*) taking the goods of people and a thief or a bandit taking them is the presence or the absence of the veil. The Friend of God beholds his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—and is charged by Him to take. It says in God's word: "I haven't done it on my own initiative" (18/82).' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, the Pivot—God be pleased with him—went into the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs<sup>45</sup>—God give us profit through him—and found Sayyidī Abū Ya°azzā b. Abī Zayyān al-Bakkārī<sup>46</sup> paying a visit of respect. He took his leather sandals and left. I spoke about this to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! He replied: 'The difference

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<sup>44</sup> See p. 163.

<sup>45</sup> See p. 132, fn. 66.

<sup>46</sup> Unidentified.

between the Friend of God taking and the thief taking is the presence or the absence of the veil. Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, because of being a Pivot, beheld the sandals as belonging to him. He saw them on the Well-guarded Tablet (45) as his allotment and heard the command from the True—He is exalted—to take them. It's permitted for him to take them in any possible way. But the thief is veiled and unaware of his Lord.'

Then he recounted a story of °Abd al-Raḥmān al-Majdhūb—God be pleased with him—concerning the bull which his disciples had seized. Sayyidī °Abd al-Raḥmān ordered them to slaughter it and eat it. But Sayyidī Yūsuf al-Fāsī who was his [spiritual] heir refused to eat it until the owner came and informed them it was a charitable gift (*ṣadaqa*) on behalf of Sayyidī °Abd al-Raḥmān and his disciples.<sup>47</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is a well-known story and likewise that were it possible for Sayyidī Abū Ya°azzā to give sandals made from his own flesh to Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, he'd do so. We seek protection with God from voicing bad criticism against the perfect among God's bondsmen. And this is what we wished to relate in the present chapter. God bestow profit by means of it—amen!

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<sup>47</sup> See ftns. 38 and 39 above.

## CHAPTER FIVE

[1] Pp. 613-17. Zarrūq (d. 1493) said that training disciples in the strict sense had ceased. Al-Dabbāgh explains that such isn't the case today. Zarrūq was reacting to abuses in his day and age. The true shaykh cleanses a novice's body of its vanities and removes the darkness contained in it, rendering it capable of bearing the secret. The shaykh increases a novice's love of the Prophet.

[2] Pp. 617-21. Halting-stations of the carnal soul one must traverse in order to have a meeting with the Prophet in a waking state. After receiving illumination and the secret one must advance through stations of vision (*mushāhada*). If someone claims to have seen the Prophet, let him be questioned about the Prophet's pure states. It will be clear who answers on the basis of direct vision. Lights that enter the body due to illumination include light from the Prophet's body.

[3] Pp. 621-22. The shaykh's effective will (*himma*) trains the novice and arises from the shaykh's faith in God. If the novice's love of the shaykh arises from the light of his own faith in God, the shaykh will assist him even if he's absent, nay even if he's dead and a thousand years have gone by.

[4] Pp. 622-24. Which is more worthy, al-Shādhilī's path of thankfulness (*shukr*) or al-Ghazzālī's path of ascetic struggle (*mujāhada*). Both are correct but the path of thankfulness is more correct and sincere.

[5] Pp. 625-29. Can a person know what his capacity (*qābiliyya*) is for being a novice? Capacity is like manliness; it has different degrees in different persons. Certain people are innately predisposed to become a Friend of God. Others are predisposed toward wickedness. This is borne out by al-Lamāṭī's experience as a teacher.

[6] Pp. 629-31. What's the meaning of the claim that Iblīs was Sahl al-Tustarī's shaykh with regard to: 'And My mercy embraces all things' (7/156).—? Al-Dabbāgh exposes how Iblīs made use of a specious argument in his interpretation of this Qur'ānic verse.

[7] Pp. 631-33. 'In disobedience there are a hundred mercies which are accorded the believer.' Explanation: the believer is



preoccupied with extreme fear after realizing he's committed a sin which in turn prevents him from committing any further sins.

[8] P. 633. Some theological conundrums such as: 'In everything I see I see God', whereas God is above residence in a thing and union with it. Confusion arises because of the fact that the knower of God sees God's actions in created things.

[9] Pp. 633-35. When the believer visualizes the Prophet's form in his mind, does this form come from the world of the spirit or from the world of images or from the world of the imagination? And is a person who hears the Prophet speak protected from Satan, as in the case of beholding the Prophet in a dream?

[10] Pp. 635-36. During the *dhikr* performance a disciple witnessed the presence of the Prophet. Is this vision (*mushāhada*) a vision of illumination or a vision of thought? Al-Dabbāgh explains that it's a vision of thought based on pure faith and sincere love. Story of the butcher who talks to his dead son in the marketplace.

[11] Pp. 636-54. Examples of intense love that removes one's sense of separate identity. They exemplify the bond of love that's required between the shaykh and the disciple. Al-Dabbāgh explains further aspects of how the disciple must love the shaykh (pp. 638-40). Two signs of the proper kind of love in a disciple: everything he does is for the shaykh's interest, and he exhibits complete reverence toward the shaykh (pp. 640-42). The meaning of 'the body's certainty' (pp. 643-44). Twelve stories that illustrate the relationship between the shaykh and the disciple (pp. 644-54).

[12] Pp. 654-62. Writers on the thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends of God convey a wrong impression about the Friends. People imagine the Friend can do anything, but even the Prophet was only granted some of the things he asked for from God. Differences between the Friends and prophets. Story of the man from Algiers who visited a Friend in Fez but rejected him because of his unimposing appearance (pp. 658-59). Jurists who deny contemporary Friends of God on the basis of descriptions of Friends in earlier generations.

[13] Pp. 662-69. Al-Lamaṭī defends the Friend of God who's received illumination against criticisms based on the *sharī'a*. The only persons who thoroughly comprehend the *sharī'a* are the Prophet and his perfect heirs such as the Support in every age. Don't judge a Friend on the basis of hearsay. Al-Dabbāgh

compared the diversity among the Friends of God to the variety of flowers that appear in springtime. Al-Lamaṭī feels concern for jurists because throughout past generations they've often denied the Friends.

[14] Pp. 669-76. Don't judge Friends of God by appearances. God may be protecting them by making them appear to have committed a sin. Otherwise people would imagine that they're on the level of prophethood. The perfect Friend is like a mirror. His behavior reflects the company he's in. The four categories of seekers (pp. 671-72). If the Friend is overwhelmed by fear during vision, he may do something indecent in order to bring himself back to his senses. He may expose his 'private parts' or indulge in bawdiness and shamefulness. Story of the foolhardy old man who invested all his money in a ship during the winter season (pp. 675-76).

[15] P. 677. The Friend of God's purpose is to bring people together with God. The seeker mustn't only ask the Friend to fulfill his wishes or for things that increase his estrangement from God. The Friend will come to hate him.

[16] Pp. 677-79. The relation between the hearing (*samāʿ*) of knowers of God and their higher vision (*mushāhada*). A Friend who weeps when he sees a cat rubbing its chin with its paw. He perceives this as God's action and prostrates himself before the cat. After receiving illumination, a person remains in the same situation even if it's a reprehensible profession like being a butcher. To change would be affectation and equivalent to the sin of wine-drinking.

## (51) CHAPTER FIVE

On the office of the spiritual master (*shaykh*) and being a disciple (*irāda*), and some of what we heard from him on this subject—God be pleased with him!

[1]

One of the jurists asked him—God be pleased with him—whether what's been said is true or not, namely that the training of disciples has ceased.

The text of the question is: 'Our lord and imam, you whom God has given the illumination He confers on His noble Friends and has honored by family ties with the house of prophethood—the most excellent blessings and purest peace be upon him who

possesses prophethood—teach us—for God has taught you from His divinely communicated knowledge—that which, by elucidation of direct speech as well as similitudes, removes incomprehension from men's hearts and frees their minds from fetters, so that they come to acquire the spiritual sciences. For it's reported that the Prophet said—blessings and peace be upon him: "Mankind is God's family, and the dearest of mankind unto God are those who most benefit His family."<sup>1</sup>

One of the questions, oh Sayyidī, concerns what's transmitted from the shaykh Zarrūq—God be pleased with him: "Training disciples in the strict sense has ceased. All that remains is training by means of [a shaykh's] effective will (*himma*) and spiritual state (*ḥāl*). So give your attention to the Book and the Sunna without any additions and omissions."<sup>2</sup> Was this peculiar to his own day and age or has training disciples ceased until the descent of our lord Jesus [at the end of time]—peace be upon him—? And if you say it's ceased, what caused it to cease? And if you say it still remains, then who is the shaykh to whom the spirit of the novice (*murīd*) should be entrusted, and who should exercise authority over it through spiritual retreat (*khalwa*) or whatever he wishes? Specify for us in what clime and what country the person is found at whose hand one of God's bondsmen may attain success.'

And this jurist (52) was referred to previously in connection with explaining [the letter] *qāf* and interpreting the *ḥadīth* of the two books which contain the names of the people of Paradise and Hell.<sup>3</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh answered—God be pleased with him: 'The purpose of training is to purify the body (*al-dhāt*) and cleanse it of its vanities so it becomes capable of carrying the secret. This can only be done by removing darkness from the body, severing from its orientation attachments of falsehood and then severing from it falsehood (itself). Sometimes this occurs due to the purity in its fundamental nature, God having cleansed it without an intermediary. Such was the situation of the three noble generations that were the best of generations. People in those generations were engaged with the truth and sought after it. If

<sup>1</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., II, p. 51; as well as *Concordance* IV, p. 437.

<sup>2</sup> Quotation not found in Zarrūq's *Qawā'id al-taṣawwuf*; see different forms of *tarbiya* mentioned there on pp. 39 f.; on other works by Zarrūq cf. Nwyia, *Ibn 'Abbād*, p. 252.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 446 and p. 202 respectively.

they slept, they slept in the truth. If they were awake, they were awake in the truth. And if they set themselves in motion, their motion was in the truth. Thus anyone whose deeper vision God had illuminated and who then looked at their interiors would find that their minds—with rare exception—were engaged with God and His Apostle and sought to attain whatever is pleasing to God and the Apostle. For this reason there was much good in them. The light of truth shone in their bodies, and religious science (*‘ilm*) and the attainment of a degree of independent juridical interpretation (*ijtihād*) appeared among them that can’t be described or supported. Consequently, spiritual training wasn’t necessary in those generations. The shaykh met his novice who was to be the possessor of his secret and the heir to his light, and he [simply] spoke in his ear and by this means alone the novice received illumination because of the purity of bodies, the clarity of minds and because of the novice’s longing for upright behavior.<sup>4</sup>

But sometimes this occurs—I mean the separation of darkness from bodies—through the shaykh bringing it about, and this is after the noble generations when intentions have been corrupted and inner convictions have become dulled. Minds are then engaged with the world, seeking to attain fulfilment of lusts and the enjoyment of pleasures. The shaykh, endowed with deeper vision, now meets his novice and heir, he recognizes him and looks him over. He finds that the novice’s reason is engaged with falsehood and the fulfilment of lusts, and he finds his body follows his reason in this. It amuses itself with those who pursue trivial amusement, it’s neglectful with those who are neglectful, and it sides with the worthless. In the midst of this the limbs set themselves in motion in uncommendable actions because the mind which is the body’s master is attached to falsehood, not to the truth. Thus if he finds the novice in this state, he orders him to undertake spiritual retreat (*khalwa*), recollection of God (*dhikr*), and to diminish his food. (53) In spiritual retreat he’s separated from the worthless who are among the number of the dead. Through recollection of God false speech disappears along with trivial play and foolishness which were on his tongue. And through diminishing food the vapors in the blood diminish as does lust, and the mind returns to being engaged with God and His Apostle. If the novice then attains this cleanliness and purity,

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<sup>4</sup> From: ‘The purpose of training is to purify...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 132, l. -1 to p. 133, l. 6.

his body is able to support carrying the secret. And this is what shaykhs aim for in their training and by imposing spiritual retreat.

And so matters stood for a while, until truth consorted with the false and light consorted with darkness. The people of falsehood now trained whoever came to them, having them enter spiritual retreat and imparting God's names with a corrupt intention and a purpose contrary to the truth. Moreover, they might add magic incantations and such usages that provoke God the Sublime's deceit (*makr*) and forms of lulling someone into false contentment (*istidrājāt*).<sup>5</sup> This state of affairs was widespread in the eras when the shaykh Zarrūq—God be pleased with him—and his spiritual masters lived. Thus it appeared to them to be good advice regarding God and His Apostle to tell the people to withdraw from this kind of training in which the idle were numerous. They had the people stand in the courtyard of safety which is devoid of fear and sorrow, namely adherence to the Sunna and the Book which don't lead astray anyone who takes (54) them as his guide. The words of these masters—God be pleased with them—were uttered by way of advice and caution. It wasn't their wish—God be pleased with them—to eliminate altogether the true training. Far be it from them! Indeed, the light of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—still remains and its goodness is all-embracing and its blessing will prevail until the Day of Resurrection.

As for your words: "Who is the shaykh?", the answer for you is: The shaykh accorded leadership is someone who knows the Prophet's states—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and whose body has been given the Prophet's light to drink so that he's come to follow the Prophet's steps—God's blessings and peace be upon him! God the Sublime has provided him with perfect faith and purity of divine knowledge (*'irfān*). So this is the one accorded leadership. You must love him and associating with him will bring profit. Indeed, he joins the bondsman with his Lord and removes from him doubts about his knowledge of God and causes him to advance in his love of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

As for your words: "Specify for us in what clime and what country he's to be found", the answer for you is: Praise be to God—there are numerous persons of such description in [different] countries and among the bondsmen. And don't look

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<sup>5</sup> From: 'But sometimes this occurs...' cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 133, ll. 7-31.

for him outside the people of the Sunna and the Community. Seek him and you'll find him! "God is with those who are godfearing and those who do good" (16/128).'

[2]

The same jurist also questioned him about the shaykh who lays claim to seeing the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The wording of the text goes: 'Oh Sayyidī, one of them', i.e. one of the questions, 'is that when it comes to someone who claims to see the Prophet in a waking state—God's blessings and peace be upon him—the knowers of God say his claim is only to be accepted on the basis of proof. That is to say, he's traversed all but one of three thousand halting-stations. Therefore it's incumbent on whoever makes this claim to explain these halting-stations afterwards. What I seek from your Eminence—God perpetuate it—is that you enumerate the halting-stations for us, even if [only] by means of a symbol and summarily or whatever is possible of them—and not at great length.'

He answered—God be pleased with him: 'In the interior of every body there are three hundred and sixty-six veins, each vein bearing its own special attribute with which it was created. The knower of God endowed with deeper vision beholds these veins shining and aflame in their various characteristics. Lying has a vein set aflame by its own attribute, envy has a vein that shines by means of its attribute and hypocrisy has a vein that shines by means of its attribute, betrayal has a vein that shines by means of its attribute, conceit has a vein that shines by means of its attribute, and pride has a vein that shines by means of its attribute, and so it continues until you cover all the veins. Thus if the knower of God looks at bodies, he sees each body like a lantern with three hundred and sixty-six candles fixed in it. Each candle has its own quality which isn't like any other candle. Moreover, each one of these attributes has (55) subdivisions and categories in it. Desire, for instance, has categories depending on what it's focused on. If it's focused on the genitals, this is one category. If it's focused on rank, this is another category and if on money, this is another category and if on hope that time remains [to repent], still another category. And the same is true of lying because if someone with this attribute doesn't tell the truth, it's considered one category. If someone with this attribute thinks another person isn't telling the truth and doubts his words and doesn't believe him, this is considered another category.'

The bondsman doesn't receive illumination until he's traversed all these stations. But if God wishes His bondsman well and renders him fit for illumination, He gradually eliminates them from him one after the other. If, for example, God eliminates from him the attribute of lying, the bondsman reaches the station of truthfulness and then the station of confirming the truth. If God eliminates the attribute of desire for wealth, he reaches the station of asceticism, and if the desire for sins, he reaches the station of repentance, or if the desire for hope that time remains [to repent], he reaches the station of aversion to the House of deception (the world), and so on.

Then if he receives illumination and the secret is placed in his body, he advances by stages in the stations of beholding (*mushāhada*) the worlds. The first thing he beholds are the earthen bodies, next the translunar bodies and then the bodies of light. Then he beholds God the Sublime's actions as pervading His creation. In his beholding the earthen bodies there are stages. The first thing he beholds is the earth that he's on. Next he beholds the oceans that are on the earth. Then he beholds what's between the earth he's on and the second earth, because his sight penetrates the boundaries up to the second earth. Then he beholds the second earth, next he penetrates the boundaries up to the third earth. And so it proceeds until the seventh earth. He then beholds the air between himself and the first heaven, next the first heaven itself. And so it proceeds as in the previous manner with the earth. Then he beholds Barzakh and the spirits that are in it, then the angels and the guardian angels, and the affairs of the hereafter.

In the case of each of these visions (*mushāhadāt*) the bondsman is subject to a rightful claim from among the rightful claims of Lordliness (*rubūbiyya*) and a proper rule of behavior from among the rules of being God's bondsman (*'ubūdiyya*). In this barriers appear to him and he experiences hindrances. He beholds frightful and deadly things. If it weren't for God the Sublime conferring success and His generosity toward the impotent bondsman and His mercy on him, the bondsman would return from the least of these stages rendered feeble-minded because of them.

His traversing the stations of vision (*mushāhada*) and their terrors is more difficult for him than the stations of the attributes (56) of carnal souls, because his traversing the stations of attributes was internal and he didn't know about it until after illumination. But his traversing the stations of vision is external.

He beholds it directly and sees it because it's something he delves into after illumination. If his gaze is pure and the light of his deeper vision is complete, and if God shows him such mercy that after it no hardship exists, then God—He is exalted—will bestow on him sight of the chief of the first and the last [of mankind]—upon him be the best of blessings and the purest peace! He'll see him directly and behold him in a waking state. God the Sublime imparts to him what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has never occurred in any human being's heart. He now attains the station of well-being and happiness. May he take delight in this felicity!

If you consider the above-mentioned number of attributes and the categories contained in them along with the stations occurring in the previous visions, you'll find that they exceed the aforementioned number. Moreover, the pure qualities of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—aren't concealed from his religious community. The religious scholars—God be pleased with them—have recorded what God—He is blessed and sublime—distinguished him with in his body's exterior and in its interior—the most excellent blessings and purest peace be upon him! Whoever claims to have seen him in a waking state, let him be questioned about some of the Prophet's pure states and let his answer be heard. It won't be unclear which person answers on the basis of direct vision, nor will he be confused with anyone else. Peace!

Now if you're satisfied with this, be happy with it! But if you wish to hear more, know that if God the Sublime confers illumination on the bondsman, He provides him with a light from the lights of truth which enters his body from all directions. It penetrates the body until it's penetrated flesh and bone. From its cold and the hardship of its entering the body the bondsman suffers what approximates the agonies of death. It's characteristic of this light that it imparts secrets of created beings through the beholding of which God wishes to bestow illumination on this bondsman. And the light enters his body, being variously colored with the colors of the said created beings. So if, for example, God the Sublime wishes to bestow illumination on him through beholding created beings on the surface of this earth, then the light in question comes to him one time and it penetrates him with the secrets by means of which the bodies of the offspring of Adam were formed. Another time it comes to him with the secrets by means of which (57) animals were formed. And another time



it comes to him with the secrets by means of which inanimate things such as fruits, vegetables, etc., were formed. But he won't receive illumination through beholding any of them until he's first given to drink of their secrets. However, on each occasion he suffers what he suffered the first time. And among the created beings is the chief of existence and the luminary of direct witnessing—God's blessings and peace be upon him! But if God promises the bondsman to bestow on him illumination through beholding the Prophet's noble body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he won't behold him until he's been given to drink the secrets which the Prophet's noble body contains.

Let's suppose that the body before illumination is like something dark and that the noble body [of the Prophet] is like a light with various rays that number one hundred thousand or more. If God wishes to be merciful to this dark body, the light that assists it and provides it with drink comes to it one time. It penetrates it with these rays one after the other. Let's suppose, for example, the ray of patience. By means of it the blackness of its opposite, consisting of fear and anxiety, disappears. Another time the light comes to it with a different ray. Let's suppose it's the ray of mercy. Then the blackness of its opposite, which is a lack of mercy, disappears. And another time it comes to it with a different ray. Let's suppose the ray of forbearance. By means of it the blackness of its opposite disappears. And so it continues until you go through all the rays that are contained in the Prophet's pure, illuminated body. Then all the characteristics associated with black bile disappear from the dark body. At this point the bondsman is capable of beholding the [Prophet's] noble body because as long as some blackness remains with him, blackness is in his body, and he's unable to behold the noble body until all blackness leaves his body.

But we don't mean that if he's given to drink the secrets that are in the noble body that he contains them to the perfect degree they have in the Prophet's noble body. Rather we mean he's given to drink the secrets to the extent that his body and his fundamental nature can support. Nor do we mean that if he's given to drink some of these rays that they diminish in the noble body and their place remains empty of them. Indeed, the lights don't disappear from their place by someone partaking of them.

Thus it's become clear to you that the bondsman doesn't behold the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—until all his characteristics are effaced by the arrival of these noble

secrets and subtle lights. And this involves traversing stations that can't be counted and are beyond any reckoning.

(58) The excellence of God's Apostle admits no limit  
That can be expressed by speech of the mouth.<sup>6</sup>

It's as if whoever limited them to two thousand or more was reporting on his own situation and the illumination he'd received. He still lacks what he lacks. As for what was previously said about denying vision (*mushāhada*) to the person who hasn't been given all the lights to drink—what we meant by this was denial of perfect vision. Whoever still lacks a ray of light but experiences a vision hasn't experienced it with perfection. But God knows best!

[3]

And the said jurist questioned him about the novice (*murīd*) who increases if the shaykh is present and becomes less if the shaykh is absent. The wording of the text goes: 'Oh Sayyidī, one of them', i.e. one of the questions, 'is that if the novice associates with the perfect shaykh who's a knower of his Lord and the novice claims the shaykh trains him through his effective will (*himma*) and yet should the human physicality of the shaykh be absent due to death or travel, the novice feels a weakness in himself as far as his spiritual state, religious knowledge and action—then what's the meaning of the shaykh's training him through his spiritual state and effective will and the novice's deriving benefit from him, given that his benefit from the shaykh grows weak once the shaykh is distant from him?'

He answered—God be pleased with him: 'The perfect shaykh's effective will is the light of his faith in God—He is mighty and glorious! By means of it he trains the novice and causes him to advance from one situation to another. If the novice's love of the shaykh comes from the light of his own faith, the shaykh assists him whether he's present or absent, nay even if he's died and a thousand years have elapsed. This is why the Friends of God of every age receive assistance from the faith of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and he trains them and causes them to advance—the most excellent blessings and purest peace be upon him—because their love of him is a pure, unadulterated love which comes from their own faith. On the other hand, if the novice's love of the shaykh comes from the novice's body and not from his faith, he has benefit from it as long as the shaykh is

<sup>6</sup> Al-Būṣīrī, *Dīwān*, p. 167, l. -1.

present. But then if one body is absent from another body, severance takes place.

The sign of the body's love is that his love of the shaykh is for the sake of benefit or to ward off harm in this world or in the world to come. And the sign of love based on faith is that it's solely for the sake of God's face, (59) and not for any other purpose. If the novice experiences a decrease in himself during the shaykh's absence, the fault lies with the novice, not with the shaykh.<sup>7</sup> But God knows best!

[4]

And the said jurist also questioned him about whether the path of thankfulness (*shukr*) or the path of ascetic struggle (*mujāhada*) is more worthy. This is the wording of the text: 'And another question, oh Sayyidī—God be pleased with you and give you contentment—concerns the difference between the path of the Friend and knower of God, al-Shādhilī, and his followers on the one hand, and the path of al-Ghazzālī—God the Sublime be pleased with him—and his followers, on the other hand.<sup>8</sup> As for the first path, it revolves entirely around thankfulness and joy in the divine Benefactor without hardship and trouble. As for the other path, it revolves around self-mortification (*riyāḍa*), fatigue, hardship, sleeplessness, hunger, and suchlike. So, oh Sayyidī, are the two not in agreement about self-mortification? And then does al-Shādhilī order gratitude after one has come close to reaching God or when reaching Him, or does he order gratitude and joy in God from the first instant and the outset? [Finally,] is it possible for one man to travel both these paths or is it impossible to benefit from the one without turning away from the other. Give [us] a clear answer!'

(60) He answered—God be pleased with him: 'The path of thankfulness is the original path, the one adhered to by the hearts of the prophets, the elect Companions and others as well. It entails worship of God the Sublime with sincerity in being God's bondsman (*'ubūdiyya*) and disavowal of all allotments in acknowledgement of impotence, shortcoming, and failure to fulfill the rightful claim of Lordliness (*rubūbiyya*), while this [attitude] remains constant in the heart during the passage of hours and periods of time. When God—He is blessed and exalted—knew their truthfulness in this, He rewarded them with

<sup>7</sup> From: 'And the said jurist questioned him...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 213, ll. 9 to -2.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. 'Eighteenth Century', pp. 341 f.

what His generosity requires in the way of illumination regarding knowledge of Him and attainment of the secrets of belief in Him—He is mighty and glorious! When the adherents of self-mortification heard about the illumination these people received, they made this the object of their own seeking and desire. They sought after it by means of fasting, rising [at night], sleeplessness and continuous spiritual retreat, until they came to attain what they attained.

And from the start emigration (*hijra*) on the path of thankfulness was to God and to His Apostle, not to illumination and the acquisition of unveilings. Emigration on the path of self-mortification, however, was aimed at illumination and the acquisition of spiritual ranks.

Journeying on the first path is a journey of hearts, while on the second path it's a journey of bodies. And illumination on the first path is a sudden onslaught that the bondsman hadn't been desiring. While the bondsman was in the station of seeking repentance and forgiveness of sins, behold clear illumination came over him!

Both paths are correct but the path of thankfulness is more correct and more sincere. Both paths are in agreement about self-mortification but in the first there is self-mortification of hearts by means of their attachment to God—He is mighty and glorious—and their compulsory devotion to His door and taking refuge with God in what one does and omits to do, and avoiding the forgetfulness that occurs in between one's occasions of spiritual presence (*hudūr*). In short, self-mortification consists of attaching one's heart to God—He is sublime and exalted—and perseverance in this, even if the exterior isn't involved with immense worship. Therefore the one who adopts it fasts and breaks his fast, rises [at night] and sleeps, is intimate with women, and undertakes all the stipulations of the law contrary to mortification of the flesh.<sup>9</sup>

And another time, after having said: 'Emigration on the path of self-mortification was aimed at illumination and the acquisition of spiritual ranks', he added: 'After illumination there's the person who remains with his first intention. His heart is concerned with the things he beholds in the worlds and he delights in the unveiling he experiences, walking on water, covering (61) great distances in one step, and this he considers to be the goal. Such a

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<sup>9</sup> From: 'The path of thankfulness is the original path...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 134, ll. 2-27.

person is one of those whose hearts were empty of God—He is mighty and glorious—at the outset as well as in the end. He's one of: "...the greatest losers in their works whose striving goes astray in the present world, while they think they're doing good deeds" (18/103).

And among them is someone whose intention changes after illumination. God the Sublime shows him mercy and takes him by the hand. His heart then attaches itself to God—He is sublime and exalted—and he turns away from anything other than God. The situation that occurred for this person after illumination was the starting point for the path of thankfulness. But what a distance there is between these two paths! What a difference between their goals!

In short, journeying on the first path is a journey of hearts and on the second a journey of bodies. The intention on the first path is pure, while on the second it's adulterated. The illumination on the first path is a sudden onslaught that the bondsman hadn't desired and it's divine, while on the second it's acquired by a stratagem and a means. Thus illumination is divided into these two kinds. The illumination on the first path is only acquired by a believer who's an intimate and beloved knower of God, in contrast to that of the second path. Indeed, you've heard that [Christian] monks and rabbis of the Jews practice forms of self-mortification by means of which they attain certain results that lure them to destruction (*istidrājāt*).<sup>10</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: 'In what we have to say here we're speaking about self-mortification in general, whether it be authentic or false. We aren't speaking about the self-mortification of Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī in particular—God be pleased with him! Verily, he was an imam of truth and a Friend of God with sincerity.

As for the question: "And is it possible for one man to travel both these paths?", the answer is that it's possible, for no contradiction exists between the two. It's possible for a person to attach his heart to God—He is mighty and glorious—with regard to everything he does and omits to do, while he engages his exterior in forms of ascetic struggle and self-mortification. But God the Sublime knows best!

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<sup>10</sup> From: 'Emigration on the path of self-mortification...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 134, l. -10 to p. 135, l. 1.

[5]

And the same jurist questioned him further. The wording of the text goes: 'And another question, oh Sayyidī, concerns whether it's possible for a human being to know his capacity (*qābiliyya*) for being a novice or his lack thereof? I mean his particular capacity (*qābiliyya*).<sup>11</sup> Or can this only be made known to him by someone else, an upright shaykh or a brother who gives sincere advice?'

(62) He answered—God be pleased with him: 'A person can know by himself what his capacity is by observing the dominant element in his thought. The latter is what his body has been created for, and it's necessary for the body to follow what his thought is engaged in, whether his body was established in it from the beginning or not. Anyone whose thought is dominated by love of God and an inclination for Him, awareness of His awesome power, and fear before His splendor and majesty—this is a sign that God wishes that person well, whether his body was established in offenses or in acts of conformity. Even if it was established in offenses, God the Sublime will see that it returns to goodness, well-being, upright behavior and success. Moreover, the said capacity is like manliness and bravery which differ in intensity and weakness, and you can recognize its different degrees. Whoever looks at a group of boys playing recognizes which one's manliness is strong and which one's manliness is weak, and which one's manliness is intermediate. It's this way with the people of capacity. They differ with regard to the presence of the kind of thought just referred to. Among them is someone who's on a high level because that thought is dominant in him at all times, and there's someone to whom it only comes on rare occasions, and then there's someone in the middle.

The secret behind this is that the thought and the ideas that occur in the interior are a light from the lights of reason which the reason imparts to the body in accordance with the divine decree and what destiny has predetermined. If good has been intended for the body, reason casts into it the thought for good and its causes, so that the body attains it. If evil has been intended for the body, reason casts into it the thought for evil and its causes, so that the body reaches it and obtains it.

Similarly, the good follows the three previously mentioned degrees of thought, and evil as well follows the degrees of

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<sup>11</sup> On this concept cf. 'Neo-Sufism', p. 72, in particular fn. 72. It plays an important role in Ibn al-ʿArabī's thought; see Chittick, *Path*, p. 91.

thought concerning it. Moreover, capacity isn't conferred by what's been predetermined. Rather capacity [simply] appears in everything the divine decree predetermined that the body would attain and reach.

Now whoever looks at a group of boys and it's been predetermined that one of them will be a scribe and another will be a bleeder and another will be a policeman, for example—the first knows how to wield a pen for writing and he acquires this with the least instruction. He doesn't know how to wield a razor to give relief [by bleeding someone] and he doesn't know how to wield a knife. And if he were instructed, what good would it do? And the second knows how to wield a razor but doesn't know how to wield a pen and a knife. And the third knows how to attach a knife but doesn't know how to wield a pen and a razor.

(63) "Everyone is given help with what he was created for."

It's the same for someone whose dominant thought is commerce in cloth and suchlike and yet his father wants to set him up in agriculture. No good comes from him. But were his father to set him up in commerce, what he accomplished would satisfy and please his father. What this indicates is that capacity for every matter is based on thought about it. Everyone has understanding of whatever his thought is occupied with. But God alone gives success!

I, al-Lamatī, would add that I heard the following from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him:

'A woman who lived in by-gone days had two sons and a daughter. When she was on the point of dying, she said to those [with her]: "My son So-and-so will become one of the godly men and the other son will be one of the wicked. The girl will come to have much wealth and abundant worldly goods." She was asked: "Do you know the Unseen?" She replied: "I don't know the Unseen but I looked at the first son and I saw that he's filled with fear of God the Sublime. He does nothing unjust to any of the boys. His Lord—He is exalted—is continually present in his heart. So I knew he'll become good. I looked at the second one and I saw he was the opposite. So I knew his final outcome will be wicked. And I looked at the girl when she was still small and I found that from old rags she was making ankle-rings, necklaces and bracelets, and whatever women wear and adorn themselves with. She was always busy with this. So I knew she'll end up with many worldly goods.'"

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that someone informed me that there was an orphan and his mother put him to work in silk-making. He worked at it and it was very hard for him. Then one day he passed by some people who were engaged in plaster-work and sculpting and ornamenting plaster. He said: 'I looked at them and my mind was swept away by them. That day I abandoned silk-making and went to work with them. My limbs performed the work rapidly and my heart felt enthusiasm. It was as if I'd been in prison but now I'd come out. I possessed a great facility for understanding plaster-work and I never returned to silk-making.'

(64) And I should add that today he's chief of the group occupied with the craft of plaster-work and: 'Everyone is given help with what he was created for.'

One of the people informed me that he once owned a weak donkey and lived opposite a group in the desert. [He related:] 'Among them was a small orphan boy whose only concern was riding my donkey. But he rode it the way one rides a horse. He put spurs made of thorns on his feet and attached a bridle made of palm leaves to the donkey. In his hand he held a lance made from sticks. And so he went on moving about on the donkey. As often as we drove him away, he'd come back to the donkey if we weren't watching it. When the child grew up and reached maturity, he returned with the stewards who train the horse of the sultan<sup>12</sup>—God give him victory—and: "Everyone is given help with what he was created for."'

And here let's relate the story about a teacher of boys who used to test them by giving them birds. He ordered each of them to slaughter his bird in a place where no one would see him. So they [all] went and slaughtered their birds, except for one of the boys who was called Abū'l-<sup>c</sup>Abbās al-Sabtī<sup>13</sup>—God be pleased with him! He returned to the shaykh with his bird and said: 'In every place where I wanted to slaughter it, I found God with me.' The shaykh—God be pleased with him—then realized that he'd attain the station of divine knowledge. He gave him counsel and didn't stop watching over him. But God the Sublime knows best!

And I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'If a man is innately predisposed toward Friendship with God and God establishes him among people of disobedience and he remains with them for a while, should one of the Friends of God then pass

<sup>12</sup> The sense of '...he returned with the stewards who train the horse of the sultan' is uncertain.

<sup>13</sup> See fn. 162 in Author's Introduction; his *nisba* derives from Ceuta.



before him and the man is with that disobedient group, the disposition in him for Friendship with God will come to life—through God’s permission—and he’ll experience happiness, joy and the breast’s expansion. And this will happen solely because the Friend of God passed before them, even if the one innately predisposed toward Friendship with God didn’t know him and the Friend didn’t speak to him and no words were exchanged between them. On the other hand, if they do associate together and become acquainted with one another, don’t even ask about the coming to life of the man’s innate disposition and the increase of good within him during every moment! And if the man is innately predisposed toward wickedness—toward theft for example—and God establishes him among people of Friendship with God and divine knowledge (*‘irfān*) and he comes to serve them and consort with them (65) for a while, and should a thief, for instance, then pass before this group, the disposition for theft in the man will come to life and his breast will rejoice in the wickedness within him. And his experiencing such an upheaval will happen solely because the thief passed before him, without his becoming acquainted with him and associating with him. However, if they do become acquainted with one another, his wickedness will then become complete—God protect us from this—and: “Everyone is given help with what he was created for.”

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is a broad subject and a useful path familiar to whoever has taught religious knowledge and suchlike to the people. If these words about capacity are presented to him, he’ll find they’re like a transcribed copy of what happened to him during the period of his teaching and his efforts. Indeed, God the Sublime—He’s endowed with generosity and benevolence—established me in the station of teaching and I remained in it for some twenty-seven years. When I heard what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—about capacity and the spontaneous thoughts that bodies rely on, I compared it with what happened to many people who studied with me and I found what he said to be precise and universally applicable. Thanks to this I cast from myself many burdens that I’d borne while I was teaching them. I’d gone to extremes in giving them sincere advice and explaining by means of offering an argument and proof. I’d wanted good for them and desired it for them so much that it came to inhabit my body. All of this became my food and drink with them. But then after that they didn’t amount to

anything. Everything I'd built up with them over a period of years was eradicated by their simply associating with some idle person, or in fact it was eradicated by my simply neglecting them and not exhorting them. They were like a riding animal that goes on walking as long as you beat it but if you stop beating it, it comes to a halt. With many other people, however, the opposite happened, namely after they'd simply mixed and associated with me, what they heard from me settled in their hearts. And they went on acquiring increase in every session that they sat with me, despite my not making an extreme effort with them the way I'd done with the other group.

I continued to think about this and to seek the cause for it until I heard what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—concerning capacity. I told him what had happened to me with the first group and he said to me—God be pleased with him: 'Cast the burden from yourself. You're striking cold iron. People are given help with what they were created for and beginnings point to final outcomes. So look at beginnings and accommodate people in their proper places.' This is the sense of what he said—God be pleased with him—and from that day on I felt relief. I acquired great knowledge—praise be to God—about people's situations with regard to capacity in every matter. Praise be to God!

Now if you're clever and smart, bright and intelligent, place these words before your eyes, because (66) thanks to them you'll rid yourself of many burdens when associating with different categories of people, given the diversity of their natures. But God alone confers success—He is sublime!

[6]

And the said jurist asked him a question that's generally connected with this subject. The wording of the text goes: 'Oh Sayyidī, another question is this: What's the meaning of what Iblīs<sup>14</sup> the Cursed One said to the Friend of God Sahl b. 'Abd Allāh al-Tustarī<sup>15</sup> about the verse of God the Sublime's word: "And My mercy embraces all things" (7/156)?

Iblīs said to him: "Restriction is your characteristic, not God's characteristic."<sup>16</sup> And the verse was a restrictive one and [yet] Iblīs' words were in accordance with religious learning. What

<sup>14</sup> On Iblīs see especially Ritter, *Meer der Seele*, pp. 536 ff./*Ocean*, pp. 553 ff. The story referred to here isn't mentioned in Awn, *Satan's Tragedy*.

<sup>15</sup> Not dealt with in Böwering, *Mystical Vision*.

<sup>16</sup> Al-Sha'rānī, *Anwār qudsiyya* II, p. 4.

ploy is available to the bondsman so as to restrict the word of God the Sublime, although the verse is restrictive without his restriction,<sup>17</sup> and despite the fact that the shaykh who's a knower of God and a trainer of knowers of God, Muḥyī al-Dīn al-Ḥātimī,<sup>18</sup> says: "The Cursed One is the [spiritual] master of Sahl in this regard and his teacher." Give an answer and be rewarded for it. Upon you be the purest greeting and the best salutation!

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the description of the debate between Iblīs—God curse him—and Sahl—God be pleased with him—is as follows. Iblīs said: 'Verily, God the Sublime says: "And My mercy embraces all things", and I am a thing.' Sahl replied to him: 'But God adds: "I shall prescribe it for those who fear God" (7/156), and you're not among them. So the generality contained in "all things" is restricted.' Then Iblīs—God curse him—said to him: 'Restriction is your characteristic, not God's characteristic—He is exalted!' At that Sahl stopped and didn't give a reply. Hence al-Ḥātimī says: 'Iblīs was Sahl's shaykh with regard to this useful point, namely that restriction is his characteristic, not God's characteristic—He is sublime and exalted!'

(67) The shaykh al-Shaʿrānī<sup>19</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—relates the story but remains silent about it. The questioner imagined from his silence that the story was true. The difficulty in this lies in postulating restriction on God's part—He is exalted—and not on the part of Sahl. Thus he posed his question to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

Al-Dabbāgh answered—God be pleased with him: 'The restriction in the verse is on God's part—He is exalted—and not on the part of people. Iblīs' adherence to the specious argument that he cites—God curse him—is a false adherence. Correctness lies with Sahl—God be pleased with him—not with Iblīs—God curse him! The explanation of the praise for these words which passed over his tongue—God curse him—is that al-Ḥātimī and Sahl understood by them something which Iblīs didn't understand and which didn't occur in his thought. In Sahl al-Tustarī it aroused what was in repose and awakened in him what was sleeping and concealed. He returned to beholding what he knew from God—He is sublime and exalted! Indeed, after receiving illumination and knowledge of God as He really is, if

<sup>17</sup> The sense here is unclear.

<sup>18</sup> The famous Ibn al-ʿArabī; not mentioned in Awn.

<sup>19</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 144, CI; he died 973/1565.

the Sufis—God be pleased with them—look at the situation they were in before illumination, they find that they'd been imposing restrictions on God in innumerable forms while being unaware of it, and that they hadn't known God as He should rightly be known—He is sublime and exalted! When the Cursed One said: "Restriction is your characteristic, not God's characteristic", these words caused Sahl's attention to focus on the two situations and he experienced what he experienced, even though the Cursed One didn't intend the meaning Sahl's attention focused on, nor had it entered his thought. This is a particular form of hearing (*samāʿ*) on the part of the Sufis—God be pleased with them!

A shaykh came to the house of one of his disciples. He knocked at the door and there was no one else in the house but the disciple. The disciple said: "Who's knocking at the door? There's no one here but me." When the shaykh heard his words: "There's no one here but me", he was thunderstruck and fell down unconscious. The disciple knew nothing of this. Whoever says the disciple is the teacher of his shaykh in this sense isn't in any trouble.

And a girl asked her father to bring her something from the market. The father went out to get it and the mother said to her: "Why do you bother your father?" The girl replied to her: "Do I have anyone but him?" A Sufi heard what she said and fell down unconscious.

In this way the falsity of Iblīs' words—God curse him—are made known, as well as the truth of sudden insights of the Sufis and their allusions—God be pleased with them! But God the Sublime knows best!

[7]

(68) And the same jurist asked him a question not far from this subject, the text of which is: 'And another question, oh Sayyidī, concerns what's transmitted from one of the knowers of God, namely: "In disobedience there are a hundred mercies which are accorded the believer." What are these hundred mercies whose origin is in God the Sublime's wrath and His justice? And what's the secret of their being transformed into His mercy and His generosity?'

He answered—God be pleased with him: 'What's meant by this disobedience is the sin of the believer who's a knower of his Lord's majesty and His awesomeness. Someone with this knowledge only commits the sin in question due to the dominance of the divine decree. Nor do we mean in particular the

knower of God who's received illumination, but we mean one whose faith is sincere and whose certainty is pure. Indeed, in such a case fear of his Lord—He is blessed and exalted—doesn't abandon him even while he's obedient, so how would it abandon him in a state of sin. The cause of fear settling in his body is his knowledge of God's awesome power—He is sublime and exalted! So if we suppose the persistence of this knowledge and the absence of its opposites in the way of forgetfulness, etc., then fear persists and it settles in the body and doesn't leave him, not even when he's in a state of obedience. Indeed, he's afraid of performing acts of obedience in a way which distances him from God the Sublime. You see him trembling in fear of this possibility so that he finds no repose at all. He's overcome by this fear prior to acting, in the midst of acting, and after acting. He continually anticipates what will befall him from his Lord, fearing the awesomeness of divine lordliness and its power. Now if this is the state he's in while being obedient, what's his state like if he's committed a sin?

One of the believers sinned against his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—and after that disobedience he lived twenty-four years. Not one moment elapsed for him during this long period without tears flowing from his eyes because of fear about the disobedience. Thanks to the blessing of the fear arising from that disobedience, God—He is blessed and exalted—protected him during so long a period from committing sins and He rewarded him out of His generosity—He is exalted—with awareness of the Knower of the Hidden during this long time. Due to the disobedience the bondsman in question acquired innumerable forms of mercies.

In short, the matter revolves around fear which is permanently settled in the body and its cause is the continual (69) knowledge of the power of divine lordliness. This knowledge comes into the body from the spirit and the spirit is from the Heavenly Assembly (the angels) who are the most knowledgeable beings in creation about their Lord—He is mighty and glorious! Thus if the body is pure and the spirit provides it with some of its forms of knowledge, the bondsman will profit in all his states, both in his obedience and in his disobedience. If the body isn't pure and the spirit veils its forms of knowledge from it, then the body is given to lusts and inclined to pleasures, and this is what settles into the body. The praiseworthy situation becomes in its view like sleep and what prevails is what has settled in, for the command belongs

to him who prevails. Now his actions are in order to achieve his lusts. He pursues the goal of benefiting the body and not what being God's bondsman requires in order to fulfill the rightful claim of divine lordliness. He sins to fulfill his pleasures, nor is it of any concern to him. Consequently, it's clear that the matter doesn't revolve around obedience and disobedience but it revolves around fear and its opposite. In reality, it revolves around knowledge and ignorance. Moreover, the said number—I mean the hundred mercies—isn't meant in a precise sense. Rather the meaning is what we've indicated. But God the Sublime knows best!

The above-mentioned jurist still had two more questions. Let's present them here and then we'll be free to return to the [proper] subject.

[8]

The same jurist said: 'One of the questions, oh Sayyidī, concerns the saying of the knowers of God: "In everything I see I see God." But how can the eternal (*al-qadīm*) be seen in the contingent (*al-ḥādith*), since God is elevated above residence [in a thing] and union [with it]? And then there's their saying: "He is neither He Himself (*ʿaynuhū*), nor is He other than Himself (*ghayruhū*)."' But this entails doing away with contradictions and that's impossible.'

He answered—God be pleased with him: 'As for the meaning of the first saying: "In everything I see I see God", these are people who because of the power of their divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*)—God be pleased with them—behold His actions in fashioned things and created beings. There's definitely no created thing that doesn't contain the actions of God the Sublime—without His residence [in it] and without His union [with it]. And there are other secrets that shouldn't be divulged and shouldn't be told. In short, the complete answer mustn't be recorded in a book.

As for the second saying, it's unclear. Indeed, the eternal is different from the contingent. Moreover, what's different from something absolutely can't be the same as it, but is dissimilar from it most certainly and without a doubt. Exact identity (*ʿayniyya*) is eliminated, whereas being different (*ghayriyya*) is established. But God alone confers success!

[9]

(70) [The jurist then said:] 'And the following, oh Sayyidī, is another question: "When the believer visualizes in his mind the

form of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and represents it with a distinct identity, does it come from the world of the spirit? Or does it come from the world of images? Or from the world of the imagination? And is the person who experiences the mental form, as well as the comprehensible conversation and discussion it includes, protected from Satan as in the case of a vision in sleep, in accordance with the Prophet’s words—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Whoever sees me [in a dream] really sees me, for Satan is unable to take on my appearance.”? Is it as the Prophet says—blessings and peace be upon him—or is it not like this? Answer and be rewarded for it! And upon you be the purest greeting and salutation!”<sup>20</sup>

(71) He answered—God be pleased with him: ‘This visualization is from the person’s spirit and his reason. Whoever turns his thought to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—the latter’s form occurs in his mind. If he’s one of those who know the Prophet’s noble form because of being a Companion or one of the religious scholars who’ve made an effort investigating it and then learned it, the form will occur in his thought more or less the way it really is outwardly. On the other hand, if he isn’t one of these two, he’ll visualize him in a human form of extreme perfection in physical constitution and character traits. Perhaps the form that’s in his thought will correspond to the externals or perhaps it will differ from them. What’s present in thought is the form of his body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—not the form of his spirit—blessings and peace be upon him! What the Companions beheld—God be pleased with them—and what the religious scholars have reported about is the body, not the noble spirit. Thought is only occupied with what a person understands and is familiar with.

As for your words: “Does it come from the world of the spirit?”, if by this you mean the visualization, it’s from the world of the spirit, that is to say from the spirit of the person thinking. But if you mean by this what’s present, that is to say: “Is what’s present in our thoughts his spirit—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—?”, it’s just been stated that this isn’t the case.

As for the conversation and discussion, if this occurs to the person thinking, then his body is pure and his spirit likes the body and doesn’t veil its secrets from it but is like a friend is with

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<sup>20</sup> This subject is dealt with at length by Meier in *Taşliya*, pp. 369 ff.

his friend. Moreover, the conversation is protected [against Satan] and true. If, however, the body is the opposite of this, then the matter itself is the opposite. But God alone confers success!' Al-Dabbāgh's answers come to an end here. God be pleased with him and give us benefit through him—amen!

[10]

One day I recounted for him—God be pleased with him—that a certain godly man was performing the recollection of God (*dhikr*) with a group of his disciples. One of them suddenly underwent a change of complexion. His state was altered and he changed the way he was sitting. They asked him: 'Why did you do that?' He replied: 'And know that the Apostle of God is among you' (49/7). He meant by this that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was present with them at that moment and that he'd beheld this.

And I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: 'Is this vision (*mushāhada*) that the man experienced a vision of illumination or a vision of thought?'

He replied: 'A vision of thought, not a vision of illumination. But even if a vision of thought is inferior to a vision of illumination, it's still only experienced by people of pure faith, sincere love and truthful intention.

(72) In short, it's only experienced by someone whose attachment to the Prophet is complete—God's blessings and peace be upon him! How many a person experiences this vision and thinks it's a vision of illumination, whereas it's a vision of thought! Yet if you compare this category of people who experience such a vision—and they haven't received illumination—with the multitude of believers, the multitude in this respect is as nothing and its faith compared with their faith is like a non-entity. But God the Sublime knows best!'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that what confirms the mental vision and that it's experienced by someone who hasn't received illumination is the fact that it's experienced by someone whose love is perfected for a person, even if that person isn't the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

A butcher informed me that a son of his whom he loved very dearly died and the son's person remained constantly in his thought. His mind and his limbs were with him entirely. This was his usual state night and day. Finally, one day he went out to the Bāb al-Futūḥ, one of the gates of Fez—God watch over the city—in order to buy sheep as is the wont of butchers and his thought



was preoccupied with the matter of his dead son. While his thought was thus preoccupied, behold he saw him with his eyes. The son came toward him and stood by his side. The butcher said: 'I addressed him and I told him: "Take hold of this sheep"—a sheep he'd bought—"so I can buy another one." A brief loss of consciousness had come over me. When those who were nearby heard me speak with the boy, they asked: "Who are you talking to?" When they spoke to me, I came back to my senses and the boy disappeared from my sight. God alone knows what an emotion I felt in my interior—He is blessed and exalted!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'Love like this must exist between the novice and the shaykh. It confers great benefit.'

[11]

And I heard him say: 'Those who possess this love inflict harm and confer benefit, just as this occurs with the people of the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*).' And he said: 'If the fire of love ignites, nothing can withstand it.'

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'A certain shaykh had a disciple and the disciple loved him dearly so that the shaykh was never absent from his feelings and thoughts. If the shaykh did something in his house, the disciple imitated it in his house. If the shaykh, in his house, called out to his daughter: "Oh Fāṭima!", the disciple called out: "Oh Fāṭima!" in his house. If the shaykh said: "Do (73) this!", the disciple in his house said: "Do this!" And if the shaykh began to wind his turban around his head, the disciple would take hold of something and begin to wind it around his head. This is the way his states were at all times in relation to the shaykh's state. Through love like this that reaches such a degree [spiritual] inheritance occurs.'

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'A certain person was in love with a girl of beautiful appearance. His love for her reached the stage where if someone shouted and called out her name: "Oh Fāṭima", the lover would reply: "Yes!", without being aware of it.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Relate this point from me, for I saw it with my own eyes. If someone called out her name, he replied: "Yes", and he was unaware of it. Now if such love occurs in humorous circumstances, what must serious people be like [in this respect]!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Sayyidi Maṣṣūr used to say—God the Sublime have mercy on him: "What happened to a certain Christian lad is proof against anyone

who lays claim to love of God the Sublime. The lad fell in love with the daughter of one of their important men. When he'd met her and slept with her in the same bed and his thought had been completely swept away in oceans of love for her, she looked at his face and noticed a pimple on it. She wanted to remove it. She had a knife but it was poisoned, though she was unaware of its poison. She removed the pimple and the poison spread through his body. His spirit then departed while he was "absent" in his love of her. Now this was an infidel. He reached the point in his satanic love that his spirit departed without his being aware of it. So how must the state of believers be with their Lord—He is mighty and glorious—?

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'A devotee (*muhibb*) derives no benefit from a [spiritually] great person loving him, even if the great person is a prophet. The small person must love the great one and only then will he derive a benefit from the great person's love. However, God the Sublime is the exception. If God—He is exalted—loves the bondsman, he'll benefit from His love, even if the bondsman turns away completely.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'If a small person loves a great person, he attracts what's in the great person—but this doesn't happen the other way round.' In front of al-Dabbāgh was a pear. He said: 'If God the Sublime provides this pear with love for a sour apple, for example, and the love is very strong, the pear will absorb what's in the apple. If we (74) then split open the pear, we'll find the apple's sourness inside it. On the other hand, we won't find anything of the pear's flavor inside the apple. But it's different with God the Sublime. If the bondsman loves Him, he won't attract any of His secrets to himself unless God loves him. The secret behind this difference is that God the Sublime doesn't love a bondsman until He's caused him to know Him. By means of that knowledge the bondsman becomes aware of His secrets—He is exalted—and thus he experiences attraction to God the Sublime. It's otherwise if the bondsman's love is without knowledge of his Lord—He is mighty and glorious! In that case it doesn't accomplish anything.'

Then I said: 'They say the shaykh is with his disciple in the disciple's body and that he resides there with him.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'That's true. And it's like this with the disciple because if his love is strong, he attracts the shaykh so that he's as you indicated and the disciple's body

becomes a place where the shaykh resides. And everyone adorns his place of residence.' Here he's alluding to the shaykh's influence on the disciple's body when he resides in it.

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If the disciple loves the shaykh with complete love, the shaykh resides with him in his body. The disciple is like a pregnant woman who carries her child. Sometimes her foetus is entirely healthy and remains in a proper condition until she gives birth. Other times the foetus is lost and nothing comes of it. And other times it falls asleep and then [eventually] wakes up. Its waking up varies. It may wake up after a month, it may wake up after a year, or it may wake up later than that. So this is the disciple's situation if he's pregnant with his shaykh. 1) Sometimes his love is pure, complete and uninterrupted, and so the shaykh's affair appears in his body until God confers illumination on him. 2) Other times his love is interrupted after it had been sincere and the interruption is caused by the appearance of a barrier—we beseech God for protection from this! Then his intention toward the shaykh changes, and the shaykh's secrets are cut off from the disciple's body after they'd been shining upon it. 3) Other times his love halts in its progression for a short period or for one of middling length or for a long period. Then the secrets of the shaykh's body are held back from the disciple's body. If the love returns, the secrets return.

So let the disciple examine himself regarding which of these three categories he belongs to. And let him beseech God the Sublime for forgiveness and well-being, for success and for guidance. Indeed, He is all-hearing and close at hand!

(75) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that these are the categories found among the disciples. So let the disciple be mindful of these words for they're precious with respect to this subject. But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The disciple doesn't profit from loving his shaykh if he loves him for his secret or his Friendship with God or his religious learning or his nobility or for any reasons such as these. Let the disciple's love be attached and directed to the shaykh's person (*dhāt*), and not because of a cause and not because of a motive, but as is the love that exists between youths. Indeed, they love one another without any motives that incite love but simply out of affection alone. This is the love that must exist between the disciple and the shaykh so the disciple's love doesn't fade into ulterior motives

and causes. For when love does fade into such things, Satan enters into it and introduces many doubts into it. Then sometimes it ceases and other times it stops [progressing], as was previously discussed in the last two categories.<sup>21</sup> But God knows best!

I asked him—God be pleased with him: ‘Why does love for the sake of religious learning (*‘ilm*), Friendship with God, the secret, and things such as these, not bring benefit?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Because secrets, divine insights (*ma‘ārif*) and suchlike are all from God the Sublime and everyone loves God the Sublime but up to this point has still not loved his shaykh. Someone’s love of his shaykh proves to be true if he loves him exclusively for his person (*dhātihī*), not because of the secrets he’s achieved.’

Then I said: ‘The person (*dhāt*) of the shaykh is likewise from God the Sublime. Everything is from Him. So why is there benefit in love of one part but not another?’ He replied: ‘That’s true. But by love of the person (*dhāt*) we mean to express figuratively that the love is purely for the sake of God the Sublime because no benefit or anything else can be imagined from the person in itself. If love is directed toward it, this is a sign of purity from flaws.’

And I said: ‘People necessarily must have motives and desires. Whoever tills land for the purpose of winter barley will harvest the same. So he loves tilling for the sake of the barley, not for the sake of tilling itself (*li-dhātihī*).’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes, but if winter barley is his intention, though he pursues it to begin with, (76) his thought is then occupied with something else and it no longer remains on his mind. This person acquires much barley and he achieves immense success. On the other hand, if his thought is preoccupied with the barley day and night and he starts thinking and calculating how much it will amount to and what he’s going to do with it if it grows, this person won’t acquire any barley. Before he acquires any barley, doubt will overcome him. He’ll go on asking himself: “Am I going to attain this barley? Perhaps such-and-such a blight will strike it or the Banū So-and-so will plunder it.” By contrast, the first person’s thought is at rest concerning the matter of the barley and the matter of doubt. This is a description of the person who loves the shaykh for his own

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<sup>21</sup> From: ‘A devotee (*muḥibb*) derives no benefit...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 114, l. 11 to p. 115, l. 8.

sake (*li-dhātihī*) and the person who loves him for some [other] reason.'

One day I was talking with al-Dabbāgh while we were in Jazā' Ibn 'Āmir<sup>22</sup> in the protected city of Fez—God the Sublime watch over it—and he said to me: 'Sayyidī Maṣṣūr is at the head of the street. Would you like to meet him and make his acquaintance?' I replied: 'Yes, oh Sayyidī, most willingly! How would I not wish to meet the Pivot?' Then he said to me—God be pleased with him: 'For my part, even if I supposed your father and your mother had begotten a hundred who resembled you in your form, your qualities and your religious learning and in every characteristic of your person, inwardly and outwardly, I wouldn't look at a single one of them. You're my allotment and my portion, whereas they're like all [other] people in my view.' I then woke from my negligence and was roused from my sleep. I realized that what I brought forth was nothing. Surely, love accepts no partnership. But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'What seeks the secret, on the part of the disciple, is his earthen body (*al-dhāt al-turābiyya*) and what confers the secret, on the part of the shaykh, is his earthen body. If the disciple's earthen body loves the earthen body of the shaykh with an exclusive love, the shaykh's body will provide the disciple's body with its secrets and its divine insights. And if the disciple's body loves the secrets of the shaykh's body and love fades into its secrets and its divine insights, the earthen body will impede it from what it seeks. Then neither the spirit nor anything else will be able to do a thing for it. So let the disciple make the utmost effort in loving the body (person) of his shaykh, avoiding benefit absolutely. There's no strength and no power save in God, the High and the Mighty!'

.....  
And I asked him—God be pleased with him—whether any indication and sign of love exists.

(77) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'There are two indications.

The first indication is that the disciple's repose is in his shaykh's person and he only thinks about the latter, only acts for its sake, only experiences rapture through it, only delights in it and is only sad because of it, so that everything he does and omits to do, in secret and openly, with presence and absence, is for the interests

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<sup>22</sup> The name of a street in Fez; today Jazā' is pronounced Gzā.

of the shaykh's person and what's suitable for it. He doesn't pay attention to his own person and its interests.

The second indication is polite behavior and reverence toward his shaykh. Even supposing his shaykh is in a well and he's in a minaret, he'll see with the eyes of his head that he's the one who's in the well and that the shaykh is in the minaret. This is because reverence for the shaykh has so overwhelmed his heart, indeed it's even overwhelmed his reason.'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'People actually think the disciple is under obligation to the shaykh for a friendly service. In reality, however, it's the disciple who renders friendly service to the shaykh. Previously it was stated<sup>23</sup> that love on the part of a great man confers no benefit but love on the disciple's part exercises attraction. So if it weren't for the purity of the disciple's body and the limpidity of his reason, his carnal soul's receptivity for good and his love that exercises attraction, the shaykh wouldn't be able to do anything. And if it were the shaykh's love that brought benefit, then everyone who received his training would succeed and attain what the [eminent] men have attained.'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'An indication that the disciple loves the shaykh with sincere, beneficial love is the following. His love is able to bring about the disappearance of the secrets and blessings in the shaykh's body so that the shaykh's body is stripped of all that and becomes like the bodies of all ordinary people. If the love then persists as it was, it's sincere love. But if the love shifts and fades with the disappearance of the secrets, this is a false love. But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'An indication of pure love is that the scales the disciple uses [to assess] the shaykh are abolished so that in the eyes of the disciple the shaykh's actions, words, and every one of his states, have all been rightly guided and had success conferred on them by God. As for what he's able to understand, so much the better. As for what contains a secret he doesn't understand, he consigns it to God the Sublime in the firm conviction that the shaykh is right. But when he considers it possible that the shaykh isn't right, inasmuch as it appears to him that the shaykh is doing something improper, then he's fallen on his head and entered the company of the liars.'

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<sup>23</sup> See p. 637.

(78) He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The shaykh doesn’t demand any external service from his disciple, or that he consume his worldly goods on his behalf, or anything in the way of physical works. But he does make this one demand of him, that he believe the shaykh possesses perfection, God-given success, divine knowledge, deeper vision and closeness to God—He is mighty and glorious—and that he continue in this belief from one day to the next, from one month to the next, and from one year to the next. If that belief is present, the disciple will profit from it and profit from everything he does for the shaykh in the way of service after that. If this belief isn’t present or is present but doesn’t persist, doubts will arise in him and the disciple won’t amount to anything.’

.....

And I was with him one day near the Bāb al-Ḥadīd, one of the gates of Fez—God watch over the city—and a certain person was with us. He behaved with much respect toward the Shaykh and was submissive whenever the occasion presented itself such that none of the companions of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—could match him in this regard. Then the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said to him: ‘Oh So-and-so, do you love me for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious—?’ He replied: ‘Yes, I do, oh Sayyidī, with a sincere love for the noble face of God, devoid of concern for appearance and reputation.’ This made me jealous when I heard it. The Shaykh said to him: ‘But do tell me, if you heard that I was [spiritually] divested and the secrets that are in my body disappeared, would you still love me?’ He replied: ‘Yes, I would!’ Then the Shaykh said: ‘And if they told you I’d become a garbage collector and a street-sweeper or something like that, would you still love me?’ He replied: ‘Yes, oh Sayyidī!’ The Shaykh said: ‘And if they told you I’d become a sinner who commits offenses and doesn’t care, would you continue to love me?’ He replied: ‘Yes, I would!’ The Shaykh said: ‘And even if I went on doing this for a year and then a year and then a year...?’, and he counted up to twenty years. The man replied: ‘Yes, and no doubt and no hesitation would affect me.’ At that I said to the man: ‘Woe unto you! This is a matter you won’t be able to sustain.’

The Shaykh then told him: ‘I’m going to test you.’ I said to the man: ‘Woe unto you! Here is the beginning of fear for your sake. How can the blind sustain being tested by someone with sight? Seek pardon and forgiveness from the Shaykh and admit to him

your weakness and inadequacy. I'll support you in this.' Then we all beseeched the Shaykh for forgiveness and pardon. But what was foreordained was foreordained up to the point where he tested him with something that contained his well-being but the reason for it wasn't apparent to him and he couldn't support it. His intention toward the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—then changed.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that only a person whose clay (*fakhhār*) is true (79) can support a secret of God. He must be true in resolve, effective in determination and keen in belief. He listens to none of [God's] bondsmen and has performed the prayer for the dead over everyone but his shaykh.<sup>24</sup>

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Let's write down some stories on this subject so that anyone who wishes good for himself may draw a lesson from them. Before that, however, I intend to present words I heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—which will serve as an introduction to the stories.

I heard him say<sup>25</sup>—God be pleased with him: 'Before I received illumination I beheld a black, terrifying form that was very tall with the appearance of a camel. This happened to me once. When I received illumination and I beheld what was predestined for me from the worlds of my Lord, I searched for the world of terrifying form and sought to know in what place its kind was located. But I acquired no information about it. I asked Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm about this—God be pleased with him—and he informed me that this kind of form didn't really exist. I asked him: "So what was it I beheld?" He replied: "This is the action of the spirit—I mean the spirit of your body." I asked him: "How is that?" He replied: "If the body sets something before its eyes and is absolutely certain of it, the spirit assists the body in creating the form which it's certain of and has begun to fear. The spirit assists the body in creating it even if there's some harm in it for the body." He said: "There's nothing which stands up to the body's certainty, whether on the side of good or on the side of wickedness."

Sayyidī Muḥammad b. °Abd al-Karīm said: "Before I received illumination I passed through a place and on the way a river appeared to me which only ships could traverse. It was one of the

<sup>24</sup> From: 'He must be true in resolve...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 106, l. 9.

<sup>25</sup> The next four paragraphs and the first eight of the enumerated stories that follow are cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 106, l. 16 to p. 110, l. 1.



rivers on the surface of the earth. I then felt an immense certainty in my body that I could walk on it and that I wouldn't sink or suffer any harm." He said: "I placed my foot on the surface of the water and my certainty increased. I went on walking on top of the water until I crossed to the other shore. When I came back on another occasion, certainty had disappeared from my body and I began to have doubts about walking on it. I lowered my foot to test the water but my foot sank in the water. I removed my foot and I knew I was unable to walk on it."

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'As long as the body is absolutely certain about something, (80) Satan doesn't draw close to it. But he draws close to it if certainty has left it. And he knows when it's gone because he flows inside the blood of Adam's offspring. So if he sees that it's left, he approaches the body with doubts so that the body loses the good.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And absolute certainty is like the fortified wall of a city. When a city has a wall, the enemy has no hopes concerning it. But when a breach occurs in the wall, and gates and openings appear in it, the enemy makes haste to enter. The defect of Satan and his temptation is a consequence of the defect of the body's wall which is absolute certainty. So let every intelligent person hasten to maintain the well-being of his body's wall so that Satan doesn't approach him and no human being disturbs him.' Another time I heard him say in the same regard—God be pleased with him: 'If someone truthful promises a person something to do with concerns in the hereafter or the present world, and the person when he hears the promise is calm and assured, being certain the promise is true, this is a sign that without a doubt he'll attain the matter. If when he hears the promise he's disturbed and has misgivings about the truth of the promise, this is a sign that he won't attain the matter. Absolute certainty is the characteristic sign of the people of truthfulness and actualization (*taḥqīq*). We beseech God the Sublime by His grace and His generosity to bestow on us His sweetness and His secrets!

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But now for the stories! One of them I heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—is as follows: 1) 'There was a man who lived in earlier times whom God intended to show mercy (*raḥma*), and he loved the godly men. God put it in his heart to withdraw from his property. Thus he sold the property, collected the price, and set out with it to see a person famous for

his godliness. Groups from all regions came to visit the person, and so this blessed man (*marḥūm*) went to him with all his money. He travelled until he reached his town. Then he asked for his house and it was shown to him. He knocked at the door and a [female] servant came out who said: "What's your name?" He replied: "°Abd al-°Alī."

Now the shaykh famous for Friendship with God was one of the sinners who spend extravagantly (*musrif*) on themselves. He had a boon-companion who accompanied him in wine-drinking and other things, and his name was °Abd al-°Alī. So he had the same name as the blessed person. The servant girl went off and said to the shaykh: "The person who knocked at the door is named °Abd al-°Alī." Thinking it was his boon-companion, he said: "Let him in!"

The man then entered before the shaykh and found the wine in front of him and a dissolute woman with him. But God the Sublime bestowed on him disregard for all this. (81) He went up to the shaykh and said: "Oh Sayyidī, I heard about you in my country. I've come to you so you may guide me to God—He is mighty and glorious! This is my money. I've brought it to you for the sake of God the Sublime." The shaykh said: "God accepts it from you." The shaykh then ordered the servant girl to provide him with a flat-bread which the man took. And the shaykh gave him a hoe and ordered him to work in a garden he owned and that he assigned to him. The blessed man straightway departed with a serene carnal soul and a happy heart because the shaykh had accepted him. Off he went rejoicing in the work. Though he felt tired from his journey to the shaykh, he didn't rest [along the way] before he reached the garden. Then he set to work with happiness, delight and eagerness of soul.

Due to God's decree—He is mighty and glorious—and His friendliness toward this blessed man, his arrival before the shaykh who was an impostor and an extravagant spender coincided with the death of one of the great knowers of God. The latter was also one of the members of the Dīwān, and the Support as well as the seven Pivots were present at his death. They said to him: "Oh Sayyidī So-and-so, how many times we told you: 'Descend to one of the cities of Islam! Then maybe you'll meet someone to inherit your secret from you.' But you didn't listen to us. Now the hour of your death has arrived and your secret will be lost and you'll be left without an heir." He replied to them: "Oh my lords, even while I remained in my place, God the Sublime has

sent me the person who will inherit from me.” They asked him: “Who is he?” He replied: “‘Abd al-‘Alī, who’s gone to visit So-and-so the impostor. Just look at his purity of heart with God—He is mighty and glorious—and at his perfect sincerity, firmness of mind, effective resolve, and his deep-rooted certainty. He saw what he saw but his thought wasn’t shaken and no doubts were aroused in him. Have you ever heard of a purity such as his body contains? So do you agree to his inheriting [from me]?” They replied: “Yes, we do!”

The spirit then departed from the Friend of God and ‘Abd al-‘Alī was united with the secret. God—He is mighty and glorious—rewarded him for his good intention. He then experienced illumination. He realized where the mercy had come from and that the shaykh he’d journeyed to was given to extravagance and an impostor and that God the Sublime had shown him mercy solely because of his intention. But God alone confers success!’

2) And another one I heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—is: ‘There was a shaykh who had a sincere disciple and one day the shaykh wished to test his sincerity. He said to him: “Oh So-and-so, do you love me?” He replied: “Yes I do, oh Sayyidi.” He said to him: “Whom do you love more, me or your father?” He replied: “You, oh Sayyidi.” Then he said: “Let’s see now! If I ordered you to bring me your father’s head, would you obey me?” He replied: “Oh Sayyidi, how would I not obey you? But you shall see presently.” And he immediately departed. This occurred after people had gone to sleep. So he scaled the wall of his family’s house and ascended to the roof. Then he entered the apartment of his father and mother. (82) He found his father having intercourse with his mother. He left him no time to satisfy his desire but knelt on his father—who was on top of his mother—and cut off his head. He brought the head to the shaykh and cast it down before him.

The shaykh exclaimed: “Woe unto you! You’ve brought me the head of your father!” He replied: “Yes, oh Sayyidi! Isn’t this it?” The shaykh said: “Woe unto you! I was only joking.” The disciple said to him: “As far as I’m concerned, none of your words contain any jesting.” Then the shaykh—God be pleased with him—said to him: “Look! Is this the head of your father?” The disciple looked and behold, it wasn’t his father’s head. The shaykh said to him: “Whose head is it?” He replied to him: “The head of So-and-so the [Christian] renegade (‘ilj).”

Al-Dabbāgh said: 'The people of their city were making use of many renegades like slaves from the Sudan.'

He said: 'His father was absent that night and his wife betrayed him in bed. She had a rendez-vous with a [Christian] renegade and she gave herself to him. This was unveiled to the shaykh—God be pleased with him—and he sent his disciple to kill him as described in order to test his sincerity. He came to realize the disciple was a mountain among mountains. He became the heir to the shaykh's secret and took charge of his illumination after him. But God alone confers success!'

3) And another that I heard him relate—God be pleased with him—is: 'A disciple came to a shaykh who was a knower of God and said to him: "Oh Sayyidī, acceptance rests with God—He is mighty and glorious!" He replied: "Yes, it does." And he ordered the disciple to reside with him and to devote himself to serving him. He gave him a hoe that had a ball of iron added on the end of it which had no benefit but made the hoe heavier. And the disciple was to be the heir of the shaykh on condition that he paid no attention to the said iron ball. If he did pay attention to it and remarked: "What's the use of this? What good does it serve? The only thing it does is add weight"—then he wouldn't inherit anything from him.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'So he went on serving him for seven years and he worked with the hoe. Meanwhile, not one vein of doubt stirred in him, nor did storms of Satan's winds sway him. The said ball became like non-existence which is neither seen nor heard. And this is the situation of the sincere on whom God has conferred success.'

4) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'There was a knower of God—He is mighty and glorious—who had (83) a sincere disciple and he was the heir to his secret. God the Sublime then made him witness many shocking things on the part of his shaykh. Despite this, no doubt arose in the disciple. When his shaykh died and God bestowed illumination on the disciple, he beheld these things [the way they were] and understood that the shaykh had behaved correctly regarding them. They contained nothing that the law condemns. They'd only appeared to him to be doubtful.

One of these was that there was a woman among the shaykh's neighbors who was known for wickedness. The disciple knew her personally. And the shaykh had a wife who looked like her but the disciple wasn't acquainted with the wife. Now the shaykh had

a place where he practiced spiritual retreat between the entrance of the house and the rooms. The disciple wouldn't go into it but would stop in the entrance. It happened that the woman known for wickedness entered before the disciple while he was in the entrance and then she passed through the house. It also happened that the shaykh's wife who looked like her came forth and entered unto the shaykh in his retreat. The shaykh had sent for her to satisfy his natural desire with her. So she entered and the shaykh went to her. Meanwhile, the woman who looked like her passed on to the rooms. The disciple cast a glance at the retreat and he saw the wife with the shaykh and the shaykh was having his way with her. The disciple was sure she was the woman known for wickedness. But God kept his heart tranquil and Satan didn't upset him.

Then the wife came out and it was the time for prayers. The shaykh came forth for the prayers and performed his ablutions with sand (*tayammum*). He had a disorder which prevented him from performing a major ritual ablution [with water]. The disciple, however, was sure the shaykh performed his ablutions with sand without an injury. But God kept the disciple's heart tranquil.

Likewise, the shaykh suffered from a disorder that hindered him from digesting food so that they prepared juice for him by squeezing a melon and brought him the juice to drink. The disciple came in and found him drinking it. He was sure it was wine. But God kept his heart tranquil and no doubt arose in him.

When God then bestowed illumination on him, he understood that the woman the shaykh had intercourse with was his wife, not the woman known for wickedness. And he understood that the shaykh's performing his ablutions with sand was because of the injury to his body. And he understood that the liquid the shaykh drank was melon juice, not wine. But God alone confers success!

5) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'A disciple had a brother in God—He is mighty and glorious! This brother died and the disciple remained. And if God bestowed anything on him, he'd divide it between his children and the children of his brother in God. The disciple owned a piece of land along with his [real] brothers. It was unjustly sold off by the Makhzan and when they received the price for it, the disciple's share came to forty *mithqāls* in today's coin.

His brothers said to him: "What are you going to do with your money?" He replied: "I'm going to divide it between myself and

the children of my brother in God.” They thought he was a fool and said: “We’ve never met anyone with your lack of intelligence! Make use (84) of your money. Buy this with it and do that with it. Abandon this stupidity you’re engaged in.”

His carnal soul wanted to incline toward what they said but he told it: “Oh my carnal soul, what will you say to God—He is mighty and glorious—if you’re standing before Him tomorrow and He says to me: ‘I bestowed on you forty *mithqāls* and you appropriated them for yourself and caused the rightful claim of brotherhood to perish. So today I shall let you perish the way you caused it to perish.’”

God conferred success on him. He divided the money between himself and the children of his brother in God. When he left them, God bestowed illumination on him and gave him what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has never occurred in any human being’s heart. God made him one of the knowers of God because of his purity of intention, the fidelity of his resolution, and the effectiveness of his certainty. But God alone confers success!’

6) And I heard from someone other than the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘A great man had a number of disciples (*aṣḥāb*) and he suspected that only one of them possessed excellence. One day he wanted to put them to the test and test them he did. Everyone of them then fled, except that one individual. What happened is that he neglected them so they gathered at the door of his retreat (*khalwa*). Then he made appear to them the form of a woman who came to him and entered his retreat. The shaykh stood up and went inside with her. They were sure the shaykh was engaged in immoral behavior with her. Thus they all dispersed and their intention was lost, except that one person. He went off and, having fetched some water, he started to heat it so the shaykh could perform his ritual ablutions with it.

Then the shaykh came out and said: “What’s this you’re doing?” He replied: “I saw the woman go inside and I thought perhaps you need to perform a major ritual ablution. So I’ve heated the water for you.” The shaykh said to him: “You still follow me after you saw me commit a sin?” He replied: “Why wouldn’t I follow you? Sin isn’t an impossibility in your case. It’s only an impossibility where prophets are concerned—blessings and peace be upon them! I haven’t associated with you because you’re a prophet and commit no sins. I’ve associated with you because you’re a human being and you’re more knowledgeable

about the path than me. Your knowledge of the path still remains in you and the qualities I've known you to possess haven't disappeared. My intention [toward you] hasn't changed and my thought hasn't been shaken."

Then the shaykh said to him: "Oh my son, this world represented itself in the form of a woman and I did this on purpose so that the other group would separate from me. So come into the retreat with me, my son—God bestow success on you! Do you see a woman in here?" He went inside and he didn't find a woman. Now further love was added to his previous love. But God alone confers success!

7) And I saw in the book of Muḥyī al-Dīn, the student of Tāj al-Dīn al-Dhākir (85) al-Miṣrī<sup>26</sup>—God have mercy on him—that someone went to one of the great men and said to him: 'Oh Sayyidi, I want you to bestow on me the secret that God has distinguished you with.' The shaykh replied: 'But you won't be able to support it.' The disciple said: 'I can support it and I have the capacity for it.' So the shaykh tested him with something that caused him to fall on his head. We beseech God for protection from this!

What happened is there was a youth staying with the shaykh, whose father was an eminent man. When that disciple said: 'I can support the secret', the shaykh said to him: 'I'll bestow on you the secret—if God is willing!', and he ordered him to reside with him. Then the shaykh ordered the youth to hide somewhere so that no one would see him. The shaykh then had a ram brought to his retreat and slaughtered it. He placed some of the blood on his clothes and, carrying a knife in his hand, he went to the said disciple. Blood was dripping from his hand and he appeared to be in a rage. The disciple said: 'What's happened to you, oh Sayyidi?' He replied: 'The youth So-and-so provoked my anger. My carnal soul lost control and has slaughtered him. He lies slaughtered in that place.' And he pointed to the retreat where he'd slaughtered the ram. 'If you want the secret, my son, conceal this matter and don't mention it to anyone. If his father asks me about him, I'll tell him: "Your son fell ill and has died." He'll believe me and the matter will turn out favorably. So perhaps, my son, you'll help me and protect me in this affair. Should you do so, I'll bestow the secret on you—if God the Sublime is willing!'

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<sup>26</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 145, CII; Tāj al-Dīn died *circa* 920/1514; cf. editor's fn., II, p. 85.

Thinking that now the shaykh was in his grip, (86) the disciple's face changed and his wrath was visible. But he said: 'I'll do it', though the falsity of his words was evident. He then left the shaykh and quickly went to the young man's father. He informed him of the story and said to him: 'The false shaykh we believed had good in him has just killed your son. He was encouraging me to cover it up and asked me to conceal it from you. If you're in doubt about the matter, come with me immediately. You'll find your son wallowing in his blood.' At that the people exclaimed: 'Woe unto you! Sayyidī So-and-so would never do this. Perhaps this is only how it appears to you.' But he said to them: 'Come with me and my truthfulness or my falsity will be revealed.'

What he said spread among the people and the government authorities heard it. So with the disciple in the lead they hurried along their way to the shaykh until they came to a halt before the shaykh's retreat. They knocked at the door and the shaykh emerged. He asked them: 'What is it you want? What brings you here?' They replied to him: 'Haven't you heard what this person is saying?', and they pointed to the disciple. The shaykh asked him: 'What's happened?' The disciple replied: 'What you urged me and asked me to conceal, that's what's happened!' The shaykh said: 'Nothing has occurred between me and you. I've never spoken to you.' The disciple replied: 'Lying won't save you! You've killed someone's son.' And the people rushed toward the shaykh from every side, [exclaiming:] 'You've killed someone's son and now we're going to kill you, oh enemy of God! You who dupe the people with your worship and deceive them with your spiritual retreat (*khalwa*)!'

The shaykh said: 'Ask him how he knows I killed him.' The disciple replied: 'Didn't you come out to me with traces of blood on your hands and clothes?' The shaykh said: 'Yes. I'd slaughtered a sheep.' The disciple said: 'Then let's go into the retreat, if you're telling the truth.' So they went inside and found the slaughtered sheep. The disciple said: 'You've hidden the murdered person's body. You've put this sheep in its place so as not to be killed because of it.' The shaykh said: 'But let's see! If the young man comes out with no harm to him, will you know you're among the liars who shall not prosper?' The disciple said: 'Bring him out, if you're telling the truth.' The shaykh sent for the youth. He came forth and was unaware of what had



happened. When the people saw him, they implored the shaykh [for forgiveness] and began (87) to curse the false disciple.

Thereupon the shaykh said to him: 'Oh liar, didn't you claim you could sustain the secret and had the capacity for it? So why couldn't you conceal this matter of no importance? But we did this to you because you claimed you could support the secret. Be gone! We've bestowed on you the secret that's appropriate for your kind.' From that day forward this disciple was a warning for those who can learn a lesson, and a severe reprimand for those with false claims. We beseech God for success through His grace!

8) A wondrous story took place involving another man. He was the chief (*shaykh*) of a travelling party of pilgrims and was from the Maghrib. He was especially interested in meeting godly men. He loved them and was searching for someone at whose hands he might profit. This was his usual practice when he went out to the East and when he returned to the West. Then he met a godly man in Egypt who entrusted him with a deposit and told him: 'The man who asks you for this is your master (*ṣāhib*).' Thus he went on making the rounds among the godly men he knew, one by one, until he came back to his home town. He entered his house and remained there for a certain time. Then one day his neighbor met him and said to him: 'Where's the deposit So-and-so gave you in Egypt?' He then realized that his neighbor was the Lord of Time (*ṣāhib al-waqt*). He fell at his feet and, kissing them, he exclaimed: 'Oh Sayyidī, how have you hidden yourself from me? Without neglect I've gone to every godly man who was pointed out in the East and the West. Yet you're my own neighbor and the closest of people to me.'

Then he asked him for the secret God had distinguished him with. But the shaykh told him: 'This is something you can't support.' He replied: 'But I can support it, oh Sayyidī!' And the shaykh said: 'If you can support it, act in accordance with the condition I set.' He asked: 'What's your condition, oh Sayyidī?' The shaykh replied: 'It's a condition entailing no great loss for you, namely that you shave this long beard of yours.' He said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, how is this possible for me? (88) Along the road to the East I'm respected and revered because of my beard.' 'If you want the secret', said the shaykh, 'do what I've told you.' He replied to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, this is something I can't support.' The shaykh said to him: 'Then you're left having committed no offense against me, since you didn't accept my condition.'

And so he left him. When the shaykh died and the man had missed what he missed, he felt remorse and said: 'If in the time of the shaykh I'd possessed the intelligence I possess today, I'd have done what he said and even more!'

9) And I heard a trustworthy person relate the following,<sup>27</sup> and he was someone who used to see the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—in a waking state and smell the scent of the Prophet's city—God's blessings and peace be upon him—while in the city of Fez: 'I was with a Friend of God on Friday in the al-Andalus Mosque in the protected city of Fez—God watch over it—and when I'd performed the Friday prayers and come out of the mosque, suddenly a man appeared who kissed the hand of that Friend of God. He said: "Oh Sayyidi, I love you for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious!" Glancing at him with a disapproving look, the Friend of God replied to him: "Don't you realize that God knows whatever is secret and has kept it hidden?" That is to say, isn't God's knowledge [of something] and His good reward for it enough for you? The Friend of God then departed.

The person who claimed to love [him] wept because of what he heard from the Friend. I went up to him and said: "Oh you there, what you've claimed is an awesome matter and the shaykh must necessarily test you. Be a man! Otherwise this will be the cause of separation between you and the shaykh."

The trustworthy person continued: 'He was a neighbor to the shaykh in one of the shaykh's gardens and the shaykh possessed a fig-tree within the garden's boundaries. The man with the claim of love used to collect its fruit every year. The shaykh was forbearing. He pardoned and forgave him, and was a good neighbor. But when the man claimed to love him, the shaykh abandoned putting up with this bother and said to him: "The tree is my tree. Nothing of it belongs to you!" The one who claimed [to love him] disagreed with him and said: "It belongs to me!" Now the shaykh entered into serious strife and enmity with him, such that I heard the claimer cursing at the shaykh—God be pleased with him!'

And I, al-Lama'i, heard this [trustworthy] man say: 'We went on the pilgrimage and when I visited the Prophet's grave—God's blessings and peace be upon him—a state came over me. I said: "Oh Apostle of God, I hadn't thought I'd come to your city and

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27 The whole story, in shortened form, is cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 200.

then go back to Fez.” From the direction of the noble grave I heard a voice say: “If I’m held within this grave, let whoever comes from among you remain here. But if I’m (89) with my religious community wherever they may be, go back to your country.” He said: ‘I went back to my country.’ God the Sublime confers success!

10) And I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: ‘One of the shaykhs drawn unto God (*al-majādhīb*) displayed bad conduct and the people fled from him. One day he even poured wine on his clothes. The people smelled the scent of wine coming from him and they fled from him. Only the heir to his secret stayed with him. The shaykh in question said: “I did this on purpose so these ants would flee from me”—he was referring to the multitude of people who were following him. “I have no need of them. There is need only for you!” God alone confers success!’

11) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘A man came to one of the Friends of God and began to contemplate him. He let his gaze pass over him until he’d contemplated him from head to foot. The Friend of God said to him: “What is it you want?” He replied: “Oh Sayyidī, this is my booty. I want my body to look at your body so that tomorrow it will intercede for my body before God.”’ The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘That man gained great profit!’

When he recounted this story—God be pleased with him—he used to say: ‘There are still people left in this religious community. Praise be to God!’ God alone confers success!

12) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘A person of sincerity came to someone he believed had goodness in him and he said to him: “Verily, I love you in God—He is mighty and glorious!” The shaykh replied to him—and this was the time of the morning prayers: “If you wish to profit, don’t ever go back to your house. Go to (90) the East.”’ Al-Dabbāgh said: ‘He obeyed and didn’t contradict him. And so he gained this world and the world to come. God alone confers success!’

[12]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘Those who compile writings about the thaumaturgic gifts of the Friends of God—God be pleased with them—though they benefit the people by informing them about the Friends, also do them great harm because they confine themselves to relating miracles and relate nothing of the ephemeral things that are done by the Friends who

possess these gifts. Anyone reading their words and seeing miracle after miracle, one case of the power of free disposal after another, and one unveiling after another, will imagine the Friend of God has no lack of power when it comes to something he desires and that nothing in the way of offenses ever issues from him, not even on the level of appearances. Thus the reader falls into grave ignorance, thinking the Friend of God is characterized by one of the qualities of divine Lordliness, namely that he can do whatever he wishes and is unaffected by any incapacity. And the reader thinks the Friend is characterized by one of the qualities of prophethood, namely sinlessness.

Now the first matter belongs to the special attributes of Lordliness and God the Sublime didn't confer it on his noble apostles, so how would he confer it on his Friends? God the Sublime said to His Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "None of the matter is to do with you, whether He turns toward them or punishes them. For they are evildoers" (3/128). And He said: "You don't guide whomever you please but God guides whomever He wishes" (28/56).

And the Prophet said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "I asked my Lord—He is mighty and glorious—for two things and He bestowed them on me. And I asked him for two more things but He refused them to me." God the Sublime said: "Say: 'He is able to send punishment upon you from above you...'" (6/65). And I (the Prophet) exclaimed: "I seek protection [from this] with Your noble face", and God said: "I have granted it." "...or from under your feet..." (6/65). And I exclaimed: "I seek protection [from this] with Your noble face", and God said: "I have granted it." "...or to confuse you in sects..." (6/65). And I exclaimed: "I seek protection [from this] with your noble face", but God said: "It has already been decreed." "...and to make you taste the violence of one another" (6/65). And I exclaimed: "I seek protection [from this] with Your noble face", but God said: "It has already been decreed."

God the Sublime replied to Noah's request to save his son from drowning [as follows]: "And Noah called to his Lord and said: 'My Lord, my son is of my family and Your promise is surely the truth. You're the most just of those who judge.' God said: 'Oh Noah, he isn't of your family. It isn't a righteous deed. Don't ask Me what you have no knowledge of. I admonish you lest you should be (91) among the ignorant'" (11/45). And God the Sublime said: "God has formulated a similitude for the

unbelievers—the wife of Noah and the wife of Lot. They were under two of Our righteous bondsmen but they betrayed them so they were of no avail at all for them against God” (66/10).

Today if people see that a Friend of God invokes God but his prayer isn’t answered or they see that his son isn’t on the right path or that his wife isn’t godfearing, they say: “He isn’t a Friend of God. For if he were a Friend of God, God would answer his prayer. And if he were a Friend of God, he’d set right the people of his house.” They think the Friend of God can set right someone other than himself, even though he isn’t able to set himself right. God the Sublime has said: “If not for God’s generosity to you and His mercy, not one of you would ever have been pure but God renders pure whom He wishes” (24/21).

As for the second matter, namely sinlessness, it’s one of the characteristics of prophethood, and Friendship with God doesn’t compete with prophethood.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The good which appears on the part of the Friend of God is actually due to the blessing of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—since faith (*īmān*) which is the cause of that good has come to him through the mediation of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

As for the body of the Friend of God, it’s like all bodies, with the exception of the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them! The prophets are naturally disposed to sinlessness and in their nature is knowledge of God the Sublime and fear of God. Therefore they have no need of a law to follow and no need of a teacher to benefit from. The truth residing in their bodies—which is the letter (*ḥarf*) of prophethood inherent in them—conducts them along the proper track and the righteous path.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Were it the intention of those who compile writings on thaumaturgic gifts to explain the state of the Friend of God they write about, if they recounted what occurred to him after illumination in the way of enduring upright matters as well as ephemeral matters, people would come to know the Friends of God in reality. They’d know the Friend of God sometimes raises up a prayer of supplication and it’s answered, but sometimes it isn’t answered. He wishes for something and sometimes it’s granted, but sometimes it isn’t granted. This is just as happened with the noble prophets and the apostles—blessings and peace be upon them! What’s additional in the case of the Friend of God is that sometimes obedience appears

upon his limbs and sometimes wrongdoing appears upon them like with all people. But the Friend of God is distinguished from them by one thing, namely the divine insights (*ma'ārif*) God the Sublime has assigned him and the illuminations He's conferred on him. Despite that, disobedience (92) manifests itself in him but this is [only] according to what appears to us and not in reality. For the vision (*mushāhada*) he experiences rejects disobedience and it hinders sin, though not in a way that goes as far as sinlessness so that Friendship with God competes with prophethood. Hindrance to sin in the prophets is essential (*dhātī*), whereas in the Friends of God it's contingent (*'aradī*). It's possible for it to disappear in the Friends of God but it can't disappear in the prophets.

The secret behind this is what was previously explained, namely that the good of prophets comes from their bodies (*dhawāt*), whereas the good of the Friends of God comes from other than their bodies. Thus the sinlessness of the prophets is essential, whereas the sinlessness of the Friends of God is contingent. So if the perfect knower of God commits an act of disobedience, it's only to do with appearances (*ṣūratī*), not with reality (*haqīqī*). His intention is to use it to test and examine the person who witnesses it. This involves secrets. We beseech God the Sublime to give us success in believing in His Friends, the way He has given us success in believing in His prophets—blessings and peace be upon them!

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever knows the life (*sīra*) of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with regard to his food and drink, his sleep and his waking, and all his circumstances in his house, and knows his life with regard to his wars and military expeditions, how fortune at times favored him and other times turned against him, and how people requested a group of his Companions from him but then went and betrayed them as in the case of the expedition of al-Rajī<sup>28</sup> and the expedition of Bi'r Ma'ūna, and whoever knows what happened in the incident of Ḥudaybiya and other similar cases—(93) and all of this involves Lordly secrets about which God the Sublime informed our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—for such an individual acquaintance with the Friends of God is easy. He won't consider important the ephemeral matters and the human characteristics that he sees in their exterior.

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<sup>28</sup> On al-Rajī<sup>c</sup>, Bi'r Ma'ūna and Ḥudaybiya cf. the list of Muḥammad's military campaigns and embassies in Ibn Hishām, *Sīra* IV, p. 257.

It's incumbent on an intelligent person who loves goodness and the people of goodness to read frequently the life of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! This will guide him to acquaintance with the Friends who are knowers of God and nothing from their affairs will be obscure for him. This then is how much the pen is capable of clarifying. A hint to the sensible and the wise is sufficient!<sup>29</sup> God alone confers success!

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'A man may hear of a Friend of God in a distant country and create for himself an image of the Friend that corresponds to the miracles reported about him. If he then finds him to be different from the image previously formed in his mind, he harbors doubt about whether the person is a Friend of God.'

(94) Then he related—God be pleased with him: 'A man in Algiers heard about a Friend of God in Fez. Many miracles by the Friend were reported to him. He created for himself an image of the Friend as being a great shaykh with an awe-inspiring presence and he set out to meet him to acquire some of his secrets. When he reached the city of Fez, he asked for the Friend of God's house and was directed to it. He thought the Friend would have doormen stationed at the entrance to his house. He knocked at the door and the Friend of God came out. The visitor said: "Oh Sayyidī, I'd like you to advise me as to the whereabouts of my lord the shaykh"—for he thought the person who came out to him was the doorman. The Friend said to him: "The person you've come from your country to see and for whose sake you've journeyed for a month or more is none other than myself." The man said: "Oh Sayyidī, I'm a foreigner and I've come to the shaykh in great longing. Direct me to him and may God have mercy on you!" He spoke like this because when he looked at the Friend of God, he didn't perceive any sign in him or an awesome appearance. The Friend said to him: "Oh poor wretch, I'm the one you seek." The visitor said: "I tell you I'm a foreigner. I've asked you to show me to the shaykh but you're mocking me." The Friend said to him: "As God is my witness I'm not mocking you!" At that the visitor exclaimed: "God is your sufficiency!", and he departed. This was because he found the

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<sup>29</sup> From: 'Those who compile writings about thaumaturgic gifts...', at the beginning of the section, cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 32, l. 17 to p. 33, l. -2.

Friend different from the image he'd formed of him in his thought.'<sup>30</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that many a person has failed for this reason. If someone reads books written about the miracles of the Friends of God, he pictures the Friend more or less in accordance with what he's heard in the books. If he then compares this image with the Friends of God of his own era, he has doubts about all of them due to the characteristics he sees in them that aren't recorded in the books. Had he witnessed the Friends of God whose miracles have been recorded before their miracles were recorded, he'd have perceived some characteristics in them that he disapproves of in the people of his own era. In some persons ignorance may reach the point that they deny Friendship with God to anyone among the people of their own era because of the constraints established in their minds concerning Friendship with God and its actualization by means of rules. If someone applies these rules to a person among the people of his own time, he finds they don't fit that person and so he denies Friendship with God to him. The result is he comes to believe in a general Friend of God who has no existence in the external world. He doesn't know that Friendship with God is purely a question of God the Sublime choosing His bondsman and no creature among created beings is capable of defining it precisely.<sup>31</sup>

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(95) A story connected with this subject took place between a jurist from the people of the present day and age, and myself. What happened is he brought me one of the books of the Sufis in which the conditions and the rules of Friendship with God are recounted as well as what the Friend of God who's adopted as a shaykh should be like. He said to me: 'I want you to hear from me what's said in this book about Friendship with God and the conditions for being a Friend.' I knew what he was hinting at and that he intended to denounce someone who was referred to as a Friend of God. He wanted to read me what was in the book and if I acquiesced to it, he'd force me to accept the denial and objection in his interior against the Friends of God—He is mighty and glorious! So I said to him: 'Don't read me what's in the book until you answer a question for me. Once you've answered me,

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<sup>30</sup> From: 'A man may hear of a Friend of God...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 38, ll. 3-18.

<sup>31</sup> From: '...that many a person has failed for this reason...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 31, ll. 6 to -12.



read me whatever you wish. Tell me whether the author of this book has fully comprehended God's treasure-chambers, His bestowal of gifts and His awesome sovereignty? Or is he as al-Khaḍīr said to Moses<sup>32</sup>—peace be upon them: “Compared with God's knowledge the smallness of my knowledge and your knowledge is surely like the smallness of this sparrow's sip of water from the sea.”?

Now if you say: “He fully comprehends God's sovereignty and His treasure-chambers”, declare it so I may hear it from you.’ The jurist said: ‘God forbid we should say such a thing.’ [And I said:] ‘If you reply: “He's like what al-Khaḍīr said to Moses—peace be upon them!”’, then silence would be more appropriate for him. He's like the ant that had a tiny hole where he took refuge and dwelt. Coming forth from it, he found a grain of wheat and was delighted with it. He brought it into his dwelling and his delight led him to begin shouting and calling out: “Oh all you ants, no one but me has a place of refuge! I alone am well-off!”’

Then I said to him: ‘Really, you're tiring your throat and causing pain to your head without profit. How is it right for someone who knows that the knowledge of Moses and al-Khaḍīr compared with God's knowledge is like a sparrow's sip of water from the sea, to make a decision about the noble Lord and say: “To this person He doesn't show mercy and on this one He doesn't confer illumination, and this fellow isn't a Friend of God, and the rules of Friendship don't apply to this one, nor do they fit this fellow.”?’ Now if God the Sublime shows mercy to a bondsman who's an infidel and gives him faith, and then straightway confers illumination on him, what principle still remains pertaining to Friendship with God? If you're told that the sultan who's contingent, weak and has been put in charge of the people, makes his slave So-and-so rich, obstructs the noble free-man So-and-so, and rewards the Jew So-and-so in this way and that, you wouldn't regard it as implausible because you believe (96) no one rivals him when it comes to his sovereignty. If you believe this with regard to a contingent king, how can you deny it to the eternal King—He is exalted—based on your rules and your principles? For surely you believe that He is: “An accomplisher of what He wishes” (85/16) and: “One Who prevails in His purpose” (12/21).’

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<sup>32</sup> On Khaḍīr and Moses see also p. 852, fn. 14.

And the jurist replied: 'What you say is correct. By God, it's the truth!' Then folding up his book, he added: 'If we were to say these authors comprehend God's knowledge, how wretched would be what we said! And if we said they don't comprehend even a trifle of His knowledge, we must necessarily not put a restraint on God on the basis of their principles. So if they were silent, it would certainly be more appropriate for them. The rightly guided one is he whom God guides, and how many persons have been rightly guided before these principles and rules existed! God alone confers success!'<sup>33</sup>

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Another debate occurred between myself and a man of poverty (*faqīr*) devoted in service to the godly men—God be pleased with them! What happened was that both I and he often frequented one of the Friends of God. When that Friend of God died, I began to frequent another Friend. He, on the other hand, remained in the retreat (*zāwiya*) of the first one. One day he met me and said: 'Oh So-and-so, I'd like your advice.' I replied: 'Gladly! I'm at your service.' But I already understood his purpose. He said: 'You were previously with Sayyidi So-and-so and his Friendship with God wasn't doubted by [even] two people. Nowadays you've gone to someone else. You're like a person who abandons pearls and rubies, and exchanges them for stones.' I asked: 'Are you speaking on the basis of (97) a deeper insight (*baṣīra*) or on the basis of something other than a deeper insight? If your words are based on a deeper insight, tell it to us so we may tell you what we possess. If what you say is based on other than a deeper insight, tell us its proof.' He replied to me: 'It's as evident as the sun.' I said to him: 'If someone says to you: "Your words distance you from God and bring you closer to Satan", you'd reply to him: "What's your proof?" If he says: "It's as evident as the sun", what would you answer him? He fell silent and didn't know what to say.

I said to him: 'I've thought about your proof and occupied my mind with your demonstration. But there's only one thing I've found as proof for you.' He asked me: 'And what's that?' I said: 'You believe you're a partner with God in His sovereignty inasmuch as He doesn't bestow anything and doesn't confer illumination except with your permission. Conferral of illumination on a man you disapprove of doesn't occur with your

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<sup>33</sup> From: 'A story connected with this subject...', at the beginning of this subsection, cited in *Rimāh* I, p. 31, l. -11 to p. 35, l. 8.

permission and God the Sublime isn't able to confer it except with your permission. In this way it's possible for you to deny the upright bondsman of God. If you believed that God has no partner in His sovereignty and no one competes with Him in His bestowing gifts, you'd acquiesce to those good things God's bondsmen have had bestowed on them by their Lord—He is mighty and glorious!' At that the man of poverty exclaimed: 'I turn to God the Sublime in repentance! I turn to God the Sublime in repentance! I turn to God the Sublime in repentance! What you say is the truth. By God, we're no more than meddlesome prattlers. Whatever we denied was done in falsehood. God alone confers success!'

[13]

And understand—God give you success—that the Friend of God who's received illumination knows the truth and what's correct, nor is he confined to any one school of religious law (*madhhab*). If all the schools of religious law were nullified, he'd be able to bring the divine law (*sharī'a*) back to life. How could this be otherwise? The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is never absent from him for the blinking of an eye, nor does he ever emerge for an instant from the vision of God—great is His glory! Consequently, he knows the purpose of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the purpose of God—great is His glory—with regard to His religiously binding prescriptions and other things. Now if this is so, he's proof against others and no others are proof against him, for he's closer to the truth than someone who hasn't received illumination. So how is it permitted to deny someone of this description and to say he's offended (98) against So-and-so's school of religious law in such-and-such a matter? If you hear the latter, then whoever wishes to deny the Friend of God endowed with illumination necessarily falls into one of the following categories:

Either he's ignorant of the divine law which is most often the case with people of denial—and this person isn't fit to express denial, for the blind man can never deny someone with sight and it would be better for him to occupy himself with removing his ignorance.

Or he's a scholar of one particular school of religious law who's ignorant of the other schools, and he'd only express denial if he believed truth was exclusive to his school and he wouldn't go beyond it to any other school, and this belief isn't held by

anyone among the Assenters (*al-muṣawwiba*) or among the Fault-finders (*al-mukhaṭṭi'a*).

As for the Assenters, they believe that truth is in every school of religious law and all of the schools are correct in their view. God's judgement (*ḥukm*) in their view is as numerous as the opinions of independent scholars of jurisprudence (*mujtahids*). Whoever holds the opinion that something is forbidden with regard to a legal judgement, for him that's God's judgement. Whoever holds the opinion that the very same thing is permissible, for him this is God's judgement. As for the Fault-finders, in their view God's judgement is one, not multiple, and only one position is correct. However, they don't confine what's correct to one school of religious law. Rather the truth in a particular legal judgement is the opinion of a leading authority (*imām*). In another legal judgement it's the opinion of a different authority. It would thus be better for the denier to occupy himself with removing this false belief.

Or he's a scholar of the Four Schools of religious law. Yet it isn't possible for him to express denial either, unless he believed the truth had been banned from the ways of following the law (*madhāhib*) other than the four established schools of the religious scholars, ways such as that of al-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī, °Atā',<sup>34</sup> Ibn Jurayj,<sup>35</sup> °Ikrima, Mujāhid, Ma°mar,<sup>36</sup> °Abd al-Razzāq, (99) al-Bukhārī and Muslim, Ibn Jarīr,<sup>37</sup> Ibn Khuzayma,<sup>38</sup> Ibn al-Mundhir,<sup>39</sup> Ṭāwūs,<sup>40</sup> al-Nakha'ī, Qatāda, and others among the Followers as well as their adherents back to the ways of the Companions—God be pleased with them one and all! But this is a false belief. Occupying himself with a remedy for it would be better than occupying himself with denial of the Friends of God who've received illumination. Now if you've reached this point, you've understood that in reality denial is only permitted to someone who's thoroughly comprehended the divine law (*sharī'a*) and the only one who's thoroughly comprehended the law is the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and his perfect heirs such as the Supports in every age—God be

<sup>34</sup> GAS I, p. 30.

<sup>35</sup> GAS I, p. 91; died 150/767.

<sup>36</sup> See p. 328, fn. 242.

<sup>37</sup> I.e. al-Ṭabarī.

<sup>38</sup> GAS I, p. 601; died 311/924.

<sup>39</sup> See p. 458, fn. 76.

<sup>40</sup> He died 106/724; cf. editor's fn., II, p. 99.

pleased with them! As for anyone else, their silence would be better for them, if they had any understanding. And what we're talking about is denial of the people of truth among those who've received illumination. As for the people of darkness and error, their circumstances are clear to whoever examines them.<sup>41</sup>

Someone asked permission from his shaykh to deny the Friends of God who possess the truth and have received illumination. He said to the shaykh: 'Oh Sayyidī, I'll only deny them on the basis of the scales of divine law. Anyone I find who's upright I'll accept and anyone I find deviating I'll deny.' His shaykh replied to him: 'I'm afraid (100) you won't have all the weights [as a counterpoise] necessary for weighing. If you only have some of the weights and not others, your scales won't be correct.' Here he's referring to what was previously mentioned about expressing denial while being ignorant.<sup>42</sup>

I was with a person endowed with cleverness and intelligence and he heard someone pose a question to a Friend of God who'd received illumination. The question was about the surah that follows the *Fātiḥa* (*umm al-Qur'ān*), namely: 'If someone performing the ritual prayers forgets the surah and arranges prostration as compensation<sup>43</sup> for it but then forgets the prostration up to the point that he says *salām* and much time has gone by, are his prayers then invalid because of omitting the compensatory prostration—on the basis that the surah contains three customary observances (*sunan*)? Or is this not the case, on the basis that the surah doesn't contain three customary observances? The shaykh al-Ḥaṭṭāb<sup>44</sup> and others as well hold the first view, whereas the commentators on the *Risāla* [of Ibn Abī Zayd]<sup>45</sup> hold the second view. And the questioner asked this Friend of God who'd received illumination to specify for him what was the truth in God the Sublime's view. The Friend replied quickly: 'The truth in God the Sublime's view is that forgetting the surah in no way obligates one to perform a prostration and if someone performs a prostration because of it, his prayers are invalid.' And the Friend of God was a common person with no

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<sup>41</sup> From the beginning of section [13] cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 88, l. 20 to p. 89, l. 7.

<sup>42</sup> From: 'Someone asked permission from his shaykh...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 87, ll. -9 to -6.

<sup>43</sup> Sense is uncertain.

<sup>44</sup> See p. 551, ftn. 32.

<sup>45</sup> GAS I, pp. 478-81; the author died 386/996.

formal education. The questioner knew him and knew the elevation of his rank with regard to illumination. So when he heard his answer, he knew it was the truth without any doubt.

As for the man with cleverness and intelligence, he experienced doubt and uncertainty. He said to the questioner after they'd left the Friend's presence: 'Surely this man'—i.e. the Friend of God—'is ignorant and knows nothing. Look how ignorant he is about God's judgement in this obvious matter. He says: "If someone omits the surah, he doesn't have to perform a prostration." But Ibn Rushd<sup>46</sup> considers the surah to be among the confirmed customary observances, just as he considers reciting it out loud or silently to be among such observances.' The questioner replied: 'The Friend who's received illumination isn't restricted to a school of religious law but he circulates with the truth wherever it circulates.' The clever man, who was a scholar of religious learning, said: 'We never go beyond the teachings of our imam Mālik.'

The questioner replied: 'What the Friend endowed with illumination said is what Ashhab<sup>47</sup> transmits from Mālik, the way the latter reports it in the *Tawdīh*.<sup>48</sup> He transmits from the imam that the surah is recommended but it isn't a customary practice (*sunna*). Moreover, this is the teaching (*madhhab*) of al-Shāfi'ī—God be pleased with him—whose view is that the surah is one of the external forms that impart [additional] good but isn't one of the customary practices. If someone performs a prostration in its place, his ritual prayers are invalid. Now our question to the Friend of God was that he specify the truth without any restriction. This isn't exclusive to what's known in Mālik's school of religious law. He's specified what we asked him about. This accords with a particular report transmitted from Mālik and it's also the way (*madhhab*) followed by al-Shāfi'ī—God be pleased with the two of them! So what responsibility rested with the Friend of God with regard to his answer?'

This was the reply the questioner gave. When the clever man heard it, he was cut off and he didn't know what to say. I would add that such is the manner and the habit of the deniers. All you find in their case is sheer deficiency!

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<sup>46</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 145, CV; he died 595/1198.

<sup>47</sup> *Wāfi* IX, p. 278, no. 4200; GAS I, p. 466.

<sup>48</sup> No work entitled the *Tawdīh* which would fit in this context has been identified; cf. GAS I, indices, s.n. *Tawdīh*.

(101) I had a discussion on this same subject with one of the eminent jurists among our shaykhs—God be pleased with them! He said to me one day: ‘Oh So-and-so, I’d like to give you some advice out of affection and complete friendship toward you.’ I replied: ‘Oh Sayyidī, please do. I should be glad to hear it.’ Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘The people are on one side and you’re all alone on the other side, concerning a man whose unveiling and Friendship with God you acknowledge. The people are critical in his regard, whereas you believe in him. But it’s impossible that you’re right all by yourself.’ And he spoke along these lines, this being the gist of what he said.

I replied: ‘Your advice to me would be complete, oh Sayyidī, if you’d answer me what I’m about to ask you. Answer this and your advice will be complete and your reward will be with God.’ He said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Ask whatever you wish.’ I asked: ‘Oh Sayyidī, have you met the man, heard his words, and discussed any matters with him so that what the people say became clear to you?’ He replied to me: ‘I’ve never met him and I’ve never seen him.’ Due to the affection and friendship between us I cast aside shame and modesty, and I said to him: ‘It surely seems to me, oh Sayyidī, that you’ve done the reverse of what’s correct. You’ve sought certainty in the domain of opinion where no certainty is possible and in the domain of certainty you’ve let yourself be satisfied with opinion or even with doubt, nay but even a lie and falsehoods.’ He replied to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Explain to me what you mean by these words.’

I said to him: ‘When you study religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and passages are cited for you from the *Mudawwana*<sup>49</sup> or the *Tabṣira*<sup>50</sup> of al-Lakhmī or the *Bayān*<sup>51</sup> of Ibn Rushd or the *Jawāhir*<sup>52</sup> of Ibn Shās and from (102) a compendium of jurisprudence like these, if it’s possible to consult these sources and to see them for yourself, surely you don’t rely on the quotation of an intermediary, even if the intermediary is someone such as Ibn Marzūq<sup>53</sup> and al-Ḥaṭṭāb and the *Tawḍīḥ* and others like that. This is the domain of opinion but it’s as if you’re

49 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 145, CIII; by Saḥnūn who isn’t mentioned here; he died 240/854.

50 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 145, CIV; al-Lakhmī died 478/1085 or 498/1104

51 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 145, CV; Ibn Rushd died 520/1126.

52 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 145, CVI; Ibn Shās died 610/1213.

53 Cf. editor’s ftn., II, p. 102; he died 564/1169.

seeking certainty and so you aren't satisfied with the quotation of trustworthy, established witnesses but you approach the matter directly for yourself. Yet in this area certainty is never possible. What you do is muster stronger opinion against opinion which is weaker than it. After all, quotation by the said intermediaries is closer to what's correct 1) because they're closer in time to the authors of the Six Compendia [of the canonical *ḥadīths*]. Indeed, they're closer to them than we are without a doubt. And 2) because the manuscripts available to the intermediary on these principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl*) have been transmitted by one of the paths for transmitting reports. But in our case we have no direct report about them and no sound manuscripts dealing with them. It's even possible that your manuscript copy contains additions and omissions. So with what certainty do you reject al-Ḥaṭṭāb's quotation from them, given that he benefits from the two points mentioned, whereas you don't?

As for your being satisfied with opinion in the domain where certainty is possible, this man, about whom you've heard what you've heard, exists, is alive and is present with you in the city and no great distance separates the two of you. Coming to know him is a felicity not followed by wretchedness, if God bestows success in loving him and according him leadership. It's perfectly possible for you to go before him and then to believe in him, know happiness and win profit, or to criticize him and go away. You'll experience certainty with regard to one of these attitudes and the darkness of doubt will disappear from your heart. But in this profitable matter and likely good, whose benefit is assured and whose possessor attains success, you're satisfied with the transmission of godless men and liars. It's been your regular practice, in the domain of opinion and little profit, not to be satisfied with the transmission of trustworthy, reliable men but to engage in the matter directly for yourself. So shouldn't you proceed the same way in this domain which is the domain of certainty, the benefit of which is pure felicity? Isn't your behavior—God be pleased with you—the reverse of what's correct?

The jurist said—God be pleased with him: 'You've silenced me with this argument. By God, I'll never be able to give an answer to it. Bear witness that I turn to God in repentance—He is mighty and glorious!'

I said to the shaykh in question: 'In (103) that case you must follow my example for two particular reasons. Firstly, you know



my deeper vision concerning things. Secondly, you know I've kept company with the said man for many years. So I know what no one else knows about him. As for those liars and godless persons, most of them like yourself have never met him. They depend instead on hearsay which has no basis to it and the cause for this is that they're excluded and forsaken [by God]. We beseech God for success, through His grace, His generosity and His nobility!' The jurist said—God be pleased with him: 'There's nothing to add to what you say.'

Next another jurist met me and he was one of the shaykhs of the previous jurist. He said to me: 'So-and-so tells me you have a cogent argument for every opponent.' Then he looked at the previously mentioned jurist and said: 'Didn't you tell me So-and-so said this and that to you?' He replied: 'Yes, I did.' The two of them then said together: 'With those words you've severed our back.'

I would add that these two jurists are the very top of their category among the people of this day and age. No one in their era has attained their level. As for the people of denial below these two, most of them depend on hearsay which has no basis to it, as previously indicated. The most clever among them, with regard to his denial, relies on saying: 'We used to know Sayyidī So-and-so and he wasn't like this'—he means here that the person being denounced wasn't like Sayyidī So-and-so. He doesn't know that flowers are of many kinds, and as for the palm-tree: 'Palms in pairs and palms single, watered with one water. And some of them We give preference above others with regard to fruit. Surely there are signs in that for a people who understand' (13/4).

I entered a garden in the season of spring with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! For a while he looked at the variety of its flowers and its blossoms. Then he lifted his head to me and said: 'Whoever wishes to know the variety of the Friends of God and the difference between them in halting-stations and states despite their being rightly guided and correct, and their sweetness in the hearts of the people, let him look at the variety of these blossoms and flowers with their sweetness in hearts.' But if he says: 'Sayyidī So-and-so whom I knew wasn't like this', confining God's mercy to the Friend of God he was acquainted with, then he's rendered narrow what's spacious. When the bedouin who (104) urinated in the mosque said: 'Oh Lord God, have mercy on me and on Muḥammad but don't have mercy on

anyone besides us!', the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said to him: 'Verily, you've fenced in what's spacious.'<sup>54</sup> And if what [the critic] said is because he thinks all who've been shown mercy must be like the Friend of God he was acquainted with, it's been previously stated that they consist of a variety of kinds. Moreover, the criticism would have to be uniformly applied. Thus this objection would also apply to the Friend of God he knew. Surely he wasn't like the Friend of God who went before him. If it's objected that the third wasn't like the second, it's objected that the second wasn't like the first who went before him.

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I've discussed this subject at length and recounted these debates that took place between myself and the jurists—God be pleased with them—out of a desire that good should come to the group of jurists and students of religious learning, and out of love for them and by way of sincere advice. For they've been afflicted with denial of the pious, virtuous and pure lords in all the generations and the ages throughout all the rural districts, villages and big cities. But their denial doesn't go beyond what I've mentioned on this subject.<sup>55</sup> Indeed, whoever among them is just and thinks over what we've written here will change his stance. The truth will become evident for him and what's correct will appear to him. I've so often engaged in debate with the jurists on this subject, thinking that they based their denial on genuine matters. But when I examined them I found the matter as I've described it to you. But God is the guide to what's correct. There's no Lord except Him and no good except His good! 'In Him I have put my trust and to Him I turn in repentance' (11/88).

[14]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'One shouldn't look<sup>56</sup> at the exterior of the Friend of God and weigh [matters] in accordance with it. Whoever does so will forfeit this world and the world to come. Wondrous and marvelous things are contained in the Friend of God's interior. He can only be

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<sup>54</sup> Cf. editor's fn., II, p. 104; and *Concordance* I, p. 424.

<sup>55</sup> Conservative Islamic circles are on record as opposing Sufi currents of thought and the spiritual claims of the Friends of God since the second century of the *hijra*. Jurists have always been in the forefront of that opposition. See *Islamic Mysticism Contested*, Introduction, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>56</sup> From: 'One shouldn't look at the exterior...' the whole of section [14] is cited in *Rimāh* I, pp. 126-130.

compared to a piece of wool with a piece of silk inside it that's only revealed in the hereafter. It's the reverse with anyone who isn't a Friend of God. They're like a piece of silk that contains a piece of wool inside it. God protect us from this situation!

(105) And let's write down the many reasons we've heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—for the appearance of offenses in the exterior of the Friend of God. These were scattered [remarks] that we've collected together here. And so we say the following:

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'One of the strictly truthful (*ṣiddīqūn*) Friends of God had a sincere disciple who loved him very much. God caused the disciple to be aware of the secrets of his Friendship with God so that he exaggerated his love for him. He almost considered his shaykh to be in the halting-station of prophethood. God then made the shaykh appear to have committed the sin of fornication, as a mercy on behalf of the said disciple. When the disciple saw this, he renounced that exaggeration in belief and accorded his shaykh his rightful place. God then bestowed illumination on the disciple.' Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'Had the disciple persisted in his first belief, he'd have become one of the infidel apostates. We beseech God for protection from this!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This is one of the secrets regarding things that appeared in connection with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—such as in the case of pollinating the palm-trees when he said: "If you didn't do it, they'd [still] turn out well."<sup>57</sup> So then they omitted the pollination and bad dates resulted, i.e. the dates were no good.

Another one was that he said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: "I beheld in a dream that we entered the Holy Mosque [in Mecca] in safety, having shaved and cut our hair."<sup>58</sup> Then he came forth—blessings and peace be upon him—with his noble Companions—God be pleased with them—but the polytheists drove them off and they only entered a year later. And there were other cases like that. God—He is sublime and exalted—did these things with his noble Prophet lest the Companions believe he was endowed with divinity. And that's why God the Sublime said: "You don't guide whomever you please, but God guides whomever He wishes" (28/56). And God the Sublime said: "You have no part in the matter" (3/128), and other things like that.

<sup>57</sup> See p. 390, at the beginning of section [18].

<sup>58</sup> Not found.

And the purpose in all this is concentration on God—He is exalted! But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The perfect Friend of God varies in accordance with the hearts and intentions of those who seek him. Whoever has a pure intention will see him in perfection itself. Miracles appear to him from the Friend and what’s pleasing. But whoever has a bad intention will experience the opposite of this. In reality, what appears to each (106) individual is only what’s attractive and ugly in his own interior. The Friend of God is like a mirror in which attractive and ugly images are revealed. For whomever perfection and guidance toward God appear from the Friend, let him praise God—He is blessed and exalted! For whomever something other than this appears let him seek the cause with himself.’

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘If God wants the wretchedness of a group and their lack of benefiting through the Friend of God, He employs him in the wickedness and disobedience they’re engaged in and they think the Friend is like themselves. But that’s not how he is. As a result, the Friend, in his state of Friendship with God, is represented as sitting with a company who drink wine and as drinking wine with them. And so they think he’s a wine-drinker. In fact, his spirit has taken on a particular form and makes appear what it makes appear. In reality, the form is non-existent. Actually, it’s the shadow of his body. It behaves as they behave, like an image that appears in a mirror. Thus if you begin to speak, it speaks and if you start to eat, it eats. If you begin to drink, it drinks. If you start laughing, it laughs and if you undertake motion, it moves. It imitates you in everything that comes forth from you. But in reality neither eating nor anything else comes forth from it because it’s the shadow of your body, not something real. So if God wishes the wretchedness of a group, the Friend of God appears with them by means of the shadow of his body and begins to practice whatever they practice. But God alone confers success!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The Friend of God considers the interior of the persons who seek him. As for their exterior, it’s of no consequence to him. The seekers comprise four categories. One category has an exterior that’s equal to its interior with regard to belief. This is the happiest category. Another category has an exterior that’s equal to its interior in disapproval. And this is the most far afield. Another category has a believing exterior but its interior is disapproving.

This is the most harmful of the categories for the Friend of God, as was the hypocrite in connection with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—because if the Friend looks at his exterior and wishes to benefit him, the interior obstructs him. And if, having seen his interior, he wishes to be distant from him, the person's exterior gives him hope.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Friend of God hears the speech of the interior, just as he hears the speech of the exterior. For the Friend this category is like someone with whom two men have sat down, the one inside the other. The visible man says: "You're my lord. I submit to your command and your prohibition. I'll be obedient and follow your direction." But the one on the inside says: "You aren't a Friend of God. The people are mistaken in what (107) they think about you. I'm in doubt about your affair and what the people say about you." And other things like this.

Now an ignorant person who isn't familiar with the interior considers this category to be equal to the first category. So if he sees the first category gain profit—and this category does obtain much good from the Friend of God—he says to himself: "Why doesn't the third category gain profit? After all, this person behaves properly and performs service himself and complies with commands and prohibitions like the first category." Then he says to himself: "Maybe there's some flaw and deficiency on the part of the Friend of God?" This is a wide door to discussion about shaykhs and for the intrusion of doubt about them.

As for the fourth category, it has an interior which is believing and an exterior which is disapproving. One can only imagine this as coming from envy. We beseech God for protection and well-being, through His grace and His nobility—amen!

And I questioned him one day—God be pleased with him—asking him: 'These sciences that emerge from you and that you speak about, do you have need of "seeking (*qasḍ*)" and "being made use of (*isti'māl*)" as far as they're concerned, or not?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The perfect Friend of God is absent in the vision of the True—He is sublime and exalted—and isn't veiled from Him for the blinking of an eye. His exterior is with mankind, and the True—He is exalted—makes use (*yast'amil*) of his exterior with the seekers according to what's been divinely preordained for them. Someone whom God has assigned mercy from a Friend, God designates that exterior for him and makes the Friend utter sciences and makes appear for

him good things that are beyond description. As for someone whom God wishes ill and hasn't assigned anything from the Friend's hand, He withholds the Friend from him and prevents him from uttering divine insights. I can only make a comparison between the Friend of God with the seekers and the rock of the Israelites.<sup>59</sup> If the rock were in the presence of the Friends of God the Sublime, twelve springs would gush forth from it, whereas if it were in the presence of His enemies—He is exalted—not a single drop would emerge from it.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that I witnessed this numerous times in the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! If someone was before him who didn't believe in him, not one instructive point would emerge from him. He'd be unable to talk about any of the sciences directly imparted from God (*ladunī*) and the Lordly insights until that person got up and left. And he'd counsel us, (108) saying: 'When someone like this man is present, don't ask me anything until he gets up and leaves.' Before this counsel we were ignorant of the matter. We'd question the Shaykh and want to extract precious things and Lordly secrets from him so the man who was present would hear and repent. But when we questioned him—God be pleased with him—we found him to be like a different man whom we didn't know and who didn't know us. It was as if the sciences that appeared from him had never been of importance to him. That was until he told us what the cause was and we understood the secret behind it. Praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The great Friend of God sins as far as matters appear to people but he isn't a sinner. In fact, his spirit veils his body and appears in its form. Thus, if the body engages in sin, it isn't sin. For instance, if it eats something forbidden, as soon as it places it in its mouth, it can cast it anywhere it wishes. The cause of this apparent sin is the wretchedness (damnation) of those present—God the Sublime protect us from this! Likewise, if you see a great Friend of God perform a miracle, bear witness that God the Sublime wishes good to those who are present. If he commits a sin, bear witness to their wretchedness (damnation). Just as their spirits have charge over their thaumaturgic gifts, they also have charge over their apparent sins. But God knows best!'

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<sup>59</sup> When the Israelites wandered in the Sinai desert and had need of water, Moses struck a rock with his staff. 'Thereupon twelve springs gushed from the rock' (Q. 2/69).

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The Friend of God may be overwhelmed by direct vision and fear that his earthen body will be destroyed. He may then make use of things which return him to his senses, even if they entail what’s reprehensible, in accordance with: “If two harms present themselves, you undertake the lesser one.” Now if someone saw him do this and didn’t know the explanation for it, he might rush to denounce him and be deprived of his blessing (*baraka*). It’s stipulated in law—that is in the pure *sharī‘a*—that if a limb is afflicted with a gangrenous sore and this causes fear for the body, it’s permitted to amputate the limb to save the body. This is the case even though a limb isn’t to be harmed. But this is in accordance with: “If two harms present themselves, you undertake the lesser one.” Similarly, if a person fears perishing from intense hunger, it’s permitted to eat carrion, both to consume one’s fill and to provide oneself with provisions from it. And there are other such applied rules which fall under this principle. These things which cause the body of the Friend to return to its senses were (109) habitual practices before illumination. And every body has its own habits. Now understand this on the basis of a hint, for a detailed explanation and explicitness would prove disagreeable. But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘If the private parts of someone other than a Friend of God are exposed, the noble angels flee from him because they’re overcome with shame. And the meaning of “private parts” is the physical private parts which are visible, as well as the mental private parts which consist of bawdiness and shameless language. But in the Friend of God’s case, the angels don’t flee from him if he behaves like this because he does so for a proper reason. He ceases to cover his private parts for the sake of something more worthy. After all: “One carries out the stronger of two benefits.” Moreover, he’s rewarded for covering his private parts, even though he didn’t do so. For it was only because something stronger impeded him that he failed to do it. If it hadn’t been for that something stronger, he’d have done it. So it’s as if he did the two together and he’s rewarded for both of them.’

I asked: ‘What’s this stronger thing for the sake of which he abandoned covering his private parts or for the sake of which he spoke using bawdy language?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Everything that causes the body to return to its world of the senses and causes its reason

to return. So if for one person exposing his private parts achieves this, that's what he does. If for someone else bawdy speech and shameless words bring it about, that's what he does. And if for a third person something else from among ephemeral things achieves this, then that's what he does. And so on and so forth.'

Then I said: 'Why does the body have need of something that makes it return to the world of the senses? Can it be absent from that world?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes, a person can be absent from it.' And he made use of a similitude to explain the absence in question. He said: 'It's like a man who has six hundred *qinṭārs* [of silver]. He's grown old and become blind. He's completely cut off from managing affairs (*tadbīr*). None the less, he has innumerable children and they're all small and incapable of anything. Then he sends the money for the purpose of trade with people who travel the sea at a time when the sea is terrifying, highly destructive and unsafe. He hasn't set aside a single cent (*fil*s) for himself and his children. And don't ask about the state of the man's reason. It departed with the people of the ship and has become completely separated from the body. It's then that two afflictions befall him.

(110) The first of them is the blocking of the orifices of the arteries that bring nourishment to the body. This takes place because they're burned by the heat that arises when his thought becomes preoccupied with the matter of the ship.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that I beheld a man, one of those who know the glorious Qur'ān by heart and a man of religious learning, whose reason was damaged—we beseech God for protection from this—because of a desire for predicting affairs (*tadbīr*), alchemy and treasures. This concern settled in his reason and his thought was engaged with it day after day. His complexion became sallow, he sat very little with people, and eventually he only ate a small amount of food. His situation went on getting worse until he soon died—we beseech God for protection from this! And the secret behind this was what the Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him—regarding the blockage of the orifices of the arteries which nourish the body. This causes the body to suffer damage, and a man's bloom and freshness disappears. He succumbs to a yellow pallor and languishing until he wastes away and dies.

[He said:] 'And the second affliction is that if reason departs with the people of the ship and is cut off from the body for a



long absence, the spirit will then come forth from the body and never return to it. For when it was breathed into the body in the first place, it entered grudgingly and unwillingly. So once it finds a way to come forth, it will come forth and never return to the body again. Now if God decides that the body's appointed hour has elapsed, this is the start of its illness and the appearance of its infirmities until God's command arrives. But if God—He is sublime—decides the body is to linger for a while, the spirit will come forth from it along with the reason, which is the spirit's innermost secret, and take charge of managing the body, despite being separated and cut off from it. This is the beginning of feeble-mindedness. If the man in question were to find a means to return his reason to its first situation and to remove the people of the ship from his reason, he'd remain safe from these two afflictions.'

He said: 'Friends of God the Sublime experience absences the same way. Thus if you see them making use of some bawdiness and laughter and things like that which causes their reason to return to them and preserves the continuance of their bodies for them, don't act in haste and deny them. Indeed, they only avail themselves of such things for this proper purpose, and people have benefit from them during the period their bodies remain.'

(111) I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that there were many times when we were with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and he said: 'Roar at us because much good will arise for you from that.' And one time he said to me: 'I would only compare the person who experiences vision (*mushāhada*) to an eagle that's flying in the air and has risen very high in its flight. Then you must suppose the sky is filled with winds and that a man holds in his hand a thin string joined and tied to the eagle's body. If the man sees the eagle rise very high in its flight, and the winds are about to carry it off to a place from which it will never return, he begins to draw in the string little by little, fearing it may break. Then, little by little, the eagle descends until it returns to the hand of its owner. Now it's the same with these ephemeral things that the earthen body is accustomed to. They bring the body back to its world of the senses.'

I should add that were it my intention to relate some of these things that happen to the knowers of God—God be pleased with them—I'd be departing from my subject. But God knows best!

[15]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The purpose of the Friend is to point the way to God the Sublime and bring people together with Him, and induce renunciation of everything but God. So if the one who seeks the Friend sets about asking him for this matter, he’ll surely find profit with him. But if he sets about asking him to fulfill wishes and desires and doesn’t question him about his Lord and how to know Him, the Friend of God will come to hate him and detest him. On the other hand, he’ll be safe if he manages to avoid a calamity afflicting him for any of the following reasons. One reason is that his love of the Friend of God isn’t for the sake of God the Sublime’s face but is wavering. Wavering love entails manifest loss. The light of truth will never descend on it. Another reason is that the Friend of God sees him in his attachment to other than God the Sublime as being in the essence of estrangement and wishes to release him from it, whereas the bondsman wishes him to increase his estrangement. The Friend of God sees that he’s left the date (*tamra*) and picked up the hot ember (*jamra*). Now the date is knowledge of God the Sublime and engagement before Him. The hot ember is estrangement from Him and grasping what’s other than Him, along with an inclination for the world and reliance on its vanities. Still another reason is that if the Friend helps him in fulfilling some of his desires and confronts him with some unveilings, the bondsman sometimes thinks this is what knowledge of God (*maʿrifa*) should be about and what people desire, and there’s nothing to strive for beyond it. But all this is error and leads to the Friend of God hating him.’

(112) I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that it’s because he hates him and deceives him that the Friend causes certain offenses to appear in his own person or tells him something that won’t actually happen so as to drive him off in this way. But God knows best!

[16]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The hearing (*samāʿ*) of the people of divine knowledge (*ʿirfān*) is based on their vision of the True—He is sublime! The things they hear are like a ship with which they cleave the seas of vision (*mushāhada*). They rely on these things and by means of them they arrive at visions that are beyond description. This is because the object of their vision—He is sublime—is living and eternal without equal and peer. All that this body can rely on is what’s

possible in contingent expression from among the things the body is accustomed to and has grown up with.'

He said: 'If their vision expands and they come to be among the great, their love (*'ishq*), as it appears to people, approximates the love of those given to jesting. Such is the case because of the delight, joy and rapture that they experience during their vision of God's action among His creatures—He is sublime and exalted! When they behold this, their spirit experiences delight that can't be described. It even happened to one of them—God be pleased with him—that he saw a cat rubbing its chin with its paw and then the Friend of God began to weep. His tears gushed forth and he prostrated himself before the cat so that his tears drenched the ground in front of the cat.'

I asked him: 'What's the secret behind this?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The spirit beheld the True—He is sublime and exalted—doing this movement and began to prostrate itself before Him, abasing itself and weeping before Him—He is sublime and exalted! And the body, which complies with the spirit, began to do what the spirit was doing and to imitate it in this. To the people his prostration appeared as if it was on behalf of the cat. But the Friend of God, while weeping and prostrating himself, only beheld the True—He is sublime! He was weeping because of Him, and abasing and humbling himself for His sake.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This happens to them continually. But if the body is absent from its reason, it complies with the spirit. If the body isn't absent from its reason, reason stops it from this for the sake of maintaining appearances. Then you note that if the Friend of God observes a branch swaying among the trees, he experiences what has just been described. That's why they say: "If my Lord strikes me with stones, they're dearer to me than fruits"—due to the delight and joy he experiences when beholding action on His part—He is mighty and glorious! But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If God the Sublime bestows illumination on a bondsman and the latter is in a particular situation—whatever situation it may be—he remains that way, even if the situation is of a reprehensible nature as in the case of being a butcher (113) and other such reprehensible professions. Thus he remains in his situation and doesn't leave it, because he considers leaving it to be affectation before the people. Affectation before the people is a greater sin in the view

of someone who's received illumination than drinking wine and similar sins.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'I know a man in Ramla in the land of Syria on whom God bestowed illumination and he was in a situation that caused people to laugh at him, like the situation of the man known in the city of Fez as Mu<sup>c</sup>ayzū. And he remained in his situation after illumination and didn't leave it.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the situation of the said Mu<sup>c</sup>ayzū was that boys and others among the dim-witted would follow him around all day long and jeer at him.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And I know another man on whom God bestowed illumination and before this he'd been a drummer. He remained in his situation after illumination and didn't leave it.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I heard many [other] awesome secrets from him on this subject—God be pleased with him—that mustn't be consigned to books. But God knows best!



## CHAPTER SIX

Pp. 682-91. Al-Dabbāgh's partial commentary and paraphrase of the *Rāʾiyya*. There are signs of authenticity in a shaykh. If your carnal soul takes a liking to works of supererogation, reject such desires. And never oppose the shaykh, etc.

Pp. 691-95. Al-Lamaʿī decides to comment himself on verses in the *Rāʾiyya* that al-Dabbāgh didn't deal with. The sincere novice recognizes no one but the shaykh, even if the shaykh appears to have gone astray.

Pp. 695-99. Stories that illustrate the relationship between the shaykh and the novice. Individuals who were impeded from attaching themselves to anyone but al-Dabbāgh. Al-Lamaʿī sees al-Dabbāgh in a dream after the latter's death. Al-Dabbāgh tells him he isn't confined to his grave but occupies the entire world.

Pp. 699-711. Al-Lamaʿī's commentary continues. The proper behavior of the novice. He imitates how the Companions behaved in the Prophet's presence. The case of Thābit b. Qays. Never laugh in the shaykh's presence, cover your legs, sit with respectful posture, and don't wear clothing reserved for a shaykh. Practice humility with everyone. Al-Suhrawardī's shaykh eats with the Frank prisoners. Remarks of Ibn al-ʿArabī al-Ḥātimī, Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and al-Ghazzālī.

Pp. 711-13. The amazing story of the Friend of God who couldn't make a single voluntary movement without trembling at the thought that it contained his perdition. He could see God's every action throughout creation.

Pp. 713-23. Al-Lamaʿī's commentary continues. The novice mustn't care about what people think. Any miracles he experiences he must report to the shaykh. What al-Suhrawardī says about the dangers of unveiling. A *wāqīʿa* is a vision about higher reality in the form of a similitude. The shaykh protects the novice. Al-Dabbāgh is very easy-going with his disciples. One Sufi shaykh said a person's action isn't pure with regard to God until he considers all his actions hypocrisy and all his states mere pretension.

Pp. 723-25. Al-Lamaʿī gives the full name of the author of the *Rāʾiyya* and information about his studies and his spiritual master.

Pp. 725-29. Al-Dabbāgh's eleven spiritual masters and some of their special faculties.

Pp. 729-30. What was the difference between what al-Dabbāgh inherited from his spiritual masters?

Pp. 730-32. Benefit of having a litany (*wird*) conferred on you.

Pp. 732-35. God's mightiest name. It completes the number one hundred. It only occurs with complete vision. Adam first devised the name Allāh. Since God is transcendent, He's different from anything that can be conceived in thought. Some strange beings that can be conceived of and therefore exist.

Pp. 735-37. Most people are incapable of vision. But don't seek vision from God until He bestows it on you. Difficult forms of visualization that are a precondition for illumination. The impossibility of knowing God as He really is.

Pp. 737-41. Performing the *dhikr* is more burdensome than worship. The effect of the different names of God. The protective light that must accompany a *dhikr*-formula.

P. 744. The ecstatic dance (*ḥaḍra*). It originated in the fourth generation with Friends of God who beheld how angels sway to and fro when recollecting God. 'The people of external attire' increased its movement and added music.

Pp. 742-44. Deeper vision (*baṣīra*). A miracle involving al-Dasūqī, al-Jilānī and Aḥmad al-Rifā'ī.

P. 744. 'A man whom God has shown mercy', and his far-reaching powers throughout the universe. The Support's 'inheritance' consists of his having drunk more from the body of the Prophet than anyone else.

## (119) CHAPTER SIX

On the spiritual master who undertakes training (*shaykh al-tarbiya*), followed by mention of the spiritual masters from whom the Shaykh inherited—God be pleased with him! Likewise, on the benefit of implanting the *dhikr*-formula, and something of what's been said about God's beautiful names; as well as the ecstatic dance (*ḥaḍra*) and matters related to this.

And so we say: the author of the *Rā'iyya*<sup>1</sup> speaks about the spiritual master who undertakes training,<sup>2</sup> and the Shaykh—God be

<sup>1</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 145 f., CVII.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. the articles by Meier in: *Bausteine*: 'Ḥurāsān' (pp. 131 ff.) and 'Qushayrī' (pp. 236 ff.)/*Essays*: 'Qushayrī' (pp. 93 ff); 'Khurāsān' (pp. 189 ff.).

pleased with him—has explicated some of those words. I'd like to record that here since the present book has been composed in order to collect what the Shaykh has said—God be pleased with him!

The author of the *Rāʿiyya* says:

'The shaykh possesses signs. If he doesn't possess them,  
He's merely journeying in nights of wayward fantasy.'<sup>3</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'The shaykh who undertakes training possesses visible distinguishing traits such as: his heart is pure toward people. He has no enemy in this religious community. He's generous. If you ask him for something, he gives it to you. He [even] loves someone who does him harm. And he overlooks the faults of the novices (*al-murīdūn*). Whoever doesn't possess these distinguishing traits isn't a shaykh.'

Next the author of the *Rāʿiyya* says:

'If he has no knowledge about the external level  
And none about the interior, cast him into the sea's depths.'<sup>4</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'What he means by knowledge of the external is religious jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and theology (*ʿilm al-tawhīd*), i.e. the amount of them necessary for someone obligated to observe the religious prescriptions.'

Next the author says:

(120) 'If the shaykh is on hand but doesn't combine  
Both these characteristics to the fullest extent,<sup>5</sup>  
A sick man's condition is closest to ruin  
When the doctor lacks knowledge about him.'<sup>6</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'That is to say, if the shaykh is on hand but he doesn't combine the characteristic of external and internal knowledge in a complete way, the novice's situation is closest to destruction in his company. The author's words: "When the doctor lacks knowledge about him" mean that the shaykh who doesn't combine [the two] is unaware—due to a lack of knowledge—of what harms the novice, and thus the novice's situation is closest to destruction in his company. Sayyidī Maṣṣūr said: "If your association (*ṣuhba*)<sup>7</sup> is with a perfect shaykh, strive that what you want becomes extinguished in what he wants and seek

<sup>3</sup> (1)=(*Rāʿiyya* 15, p. 22). The first number refers to the verse's appearance in the *Ibriz*; the next number, with a page reference, follows the sequence of the verses in the printed edition (see bibliography).

<sup>4</sup> (2)=(*Rāʿiyya* 16, p. 22)

<sup>5</sup> (3)=(*Rāʿiyya* 17, p. 26)

<sup>6</sup> (4)=(*Rāʿiyya* 18, p. 27)

<sup>7</sup> On *ṣuhba* cf. Meier's articles mentioned above in fn. 2.



not to live longer than him. With anyone other than him your well-being can scarcely exist and your reaching [God] would be the rarest and strangest of things.”

Then he says:

‘He who was only established as a shaykh by existence  
And was made manifest by victory’s unfurled banners,<sup>8</sup>  
The possessors of discipleship turned toward him  
With a sincerity that dissolves hardness in rock.<sup>9</sup>  
His sign is that he isn’t inclined to wayward fantasy.  
His worldliness is folded up, his hereafter is unfurled.’<sup>10</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘He who isn’t among [proper] shaykhs that his shaykh established in shaykhhood with authorization because he died before he perfected him but the people established and the unfurling of victorious flags made manifest, for through him God conferred on the flags of the novices victory over their carnal souls and their wayward fantasy and their satans, and because of that victory “the possessors of discipleship” and the people of aspiration who long for closeness to God—He is mighty and glorious—“turned toward him with a sincerity” that penetrates rocks—he too is a shaykh who’s accepted. What’s meant is that he may possibly have reached perfection at the hand of men of the Unseen or that he was instructed at the hand of Sayyidī Aḥmad al-Khaḍir.<sup>11</sup> And the words: “His sign”, i.e. his visible sign indicating that he deserves the rank of shaykh, [refer to the fact] (121) “that he isn’t inclined to wayward fantasy” in his training, as appears from what’s observable in his state. And in his case his worldliness is covered up, whereas his hereafter is unfolded. The words: “his worldliness is folded up” are a figurative expression for renunciation of the here and now and turning away from it, just as the words: “and his hereafter is unfurled” are a figurative expression for desiring the hereafter and turning toward it.’

Then the author says:

‘And if he gathers people together to eat his food,  
Oh novice, don’t associate with him even for a day!’<sup>12</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The sense of the words is: “Oh novice, if a shaykh of training brings people together in order to eat his food, don’t follow him and don’t ever associate

<sup>8</sup> (5)=(*Rāʿiyya* 19, p. 28)

<sup>9</sup> (6)=(*Rāʿiyya* 20, p. 28)

<sup>10</sup> (7)=(*Rāʿiyya* 21, p. 32)

<sup>11</sup> On al-Khaḍir see p. 852, fn. 14.

<sup>12</sup> (8)=(*Rāʿiyya* 22, p. 33)

with him!” What he means—but God knows best—is that if he brings people together to eat his food and has no effect on them through illumination, this becomes a gathering with him for the sake of his food, not for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious! On the other hand, if he gathers people around him to unite them with God and at the same time he offers food, it’s alright to associate with this shaykh and to follow him.’

Then he says:

‘Only ask someone about him who has deeper insight,  
Someone without wayward fantasies who isn’t deluded.’<sup>13</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘This means that unless a person fulfills three conditions, don’t ask him about the shaykh of training. He should have deeper insight, he should be devoid of wayward fantasies, and he shouldn’t be deluded. His possessing deeper insight is a precaution against the simple traveller on the path who doesn’t possess [the capacity] of working with hearts. Thus if he’s asked about the shaykh of training, he refers to another traveller on the path who makes greater effort in striving than himself, is more persistent in reciting litanies and more observant in fulfilling duties. This is because he thinks this halting-station is the goal of the path and that the difference between people of the path is based on strength and weakness. But the simple traveller on the path isn’t suitable for shaykhhood and won’t attain it. And his being without wayward fantasies is a precaution against someone given to party zeal—even if he has deeper insight—since if he’s zealously attached to a person and is then asked about a shaykh of training, he may well refer to that person because of partisan attachment. And his not being deluded is a precaution against someone who’s unfamiliar with the usage of Sufis regarding the description of the shaykh of training. So if he’s asked about the shaykh who provides training, he may well refer to a pure case of someone drawn unto God (*majdhūb*)<sup>14</sup> because of the power of knowledge of God he thinks the person possesses and his annihilation in higher reality. The pure case of someone drawn unto God isn’t suitable for shaykhhood and he won’t attain it.’

Then he says:

(122) ‘If the mirror of the eye of his intelligence grows rusty,  
It shows him the moon’s black spots on the sun’s surface.<sup>15</sup>  
And whoever is unfamiliar with the rules of meter

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<sup>13</sup> (9)=(*Rāʿiyya* 24, p. 35)

<sup>14</sup> See p. 595, fn. 34.

<sup>15</sup> (10)=(*Rāʿiyya* 25, p. 36)

Thinks omitting a foot in *taṭwīl* is an ugly offense.’<sup>16</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The meaning is that whoever’s eye becomes rusty sees blackness—such as in the middle of the moon—on the surface of the sun which never contains blackness. This is because of the reversal of realities with regard to him. The sense is that whoever isn’t endowed with deeper insight sees defect in the perfect shaykh and flees from him, and sees perfection in the traveller on the path and points him out. Now his words: “And whoever is unfamiliar with the rules of meter”, i.e. whoever doesn’t know measure in poetry, may well believe that dropping the fifth foot in the meter *ṭawīl* constitutes an ugly defect.<sup>17</sup> Similarly, whoever doesn’t know the usage of the Sufis regarding the qualities of the shaykh who provides training may well look at a perfect shaykh and think he’s a beginner and shun him, just as he may point out someone drawn unto God though he isn’t deserving.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the gist of what the author of the *Rāʾiyya* relates in these verses is that if the shaykh is without knowledge of externals and of the interior or possesses insufficient knowledge of them, there’s no good in associating with him. One is to take as one’s shaykh the person who possesses the two in full measure and displays the previously mentioned signs. This is the case if his shaykh established him in training and gave him authorization during his lifetime. But if the shaykh died before that and the person didn’t reach perfection during the time of his shaykh, if the indications of illumination have manifested themselves in him as well as the indications of goodness, and if he has turned away from the world and turned toward the hereafter and the novices have received illumination at his hands—he too is to be followed as a shaykh. On the other hand, if he only gathers people together for his food, no good will come from being acquainted with him. Moreover, a person shouldn’t ask someone about a shaykh of training unless that someone combines the three above-mentioned qualities. Anyone else may do the reverse of what’s correct.

(123) Then the author of the *Rāʾiyya* refers to the rules of behavior that the novice must follow in associating with the shaykh of training. He says:

‘Don’t come forward until you’re convinced  
He offers training worthier than anyone in the age.  
He who guards against her looking at anyone else

<sup>16</sup> (11)=(*Rāʾiyya* 26, p. 38)

<sup>17</sup> See commentary in the printed edition of the *Rāʾiyya*, p. 38.

Says to the palace beloved: “Don’t go out at night!”<sup>18</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘That is to say, don’t come to a shaykh with the intention of entering association with him until you’re convinced he’s capable of providing training and no one else in his era is more entitled to do so than he. This is incumbent on the novice because the shaykh who sees that his novice is paying attention to some other shaykh cuts off provision (*mādda*) from the novice. And the novice who enters association with a shaykh and thinks there’s another shaykh like his shaykh or one more perfect than him will, in his belief, go on longing for that perfect one. (124) His shaykh will see him longing for the other and cut off provision from him. Then he’ll neither profit from the first shaykh nor from the second.’ The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘We’ve often seen something like this in our own time. God be a friend and helper unto us!’

And earlier on the author of the *Rāʾiyya* says:

‘And after this is the shaykh who’s a model.

He imparts what God wants in secret and in private.’<sup>19</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: “‘And after” the halting-station of repentance, i.e. after having attained repentance, one then seeks the shaykh who provides training. He’s set over the carnal soul on the path of states. The benefit he brings is that he shows the bondsman what God wants from him with regard to his exterior and his interior.’ The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘You must have a shaykh who advises you and leads you to knowledge of the shaykh, how to meet him and sit with him. If this isn’t the case, know that you’ve suffered an injury but there’s no doctor for you. Whatever you do will be of no avail.’

Next he says:

‘Then rise and shun what religious learning condemns.

Procure what it heaps praise on. This is to reap pearls.’<sup>20</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘That is to say, if you find him and the Lord bestows on you the shaykh who will train you, “then rise” to serve him and acknowledge the rightful claim of association with him. Take him as an intermediary (*wasīla*) with God. Perhaps you’ll attain knowledge of God—He is mighty and glorious! But at the same time you must abandon the reprehensible actions that the law denounces (125) and acquire the actions it praises. That’s what’s meant by “to reap pearls (*durr*)”. And “*durr*”

<sup>18</sup> (12)=(*Rāʾiyya* 27 and 28, p. 41); cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 143, ll. 2-3.

<sup>19</sup> (14)=(*Rāʾiyya* 9, p. 11)

<sup>20</sup> (15)=(*Rāʾiyya* 10, p. 15)

in its primary sense means a large pearl (*lu'lu'*) and is a figurative expression for pious fear (*taqwā*), and “reaping” is cutting in its primary sense. Here the meaning is “acquiring”, as if he said: “If you shun what’s condemned by the law and you procure what’s praised by the law, you’ll acquire pious fear and attain it.” We beseech God to bestow this on us! For pious fear is what your states and your halting-stations are founded upon.’

Then he says:

‘And if your carnal soul strives after poverty,

Reject its desire and avoid poverty like an evil.’<sup>21</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘If your aspiration is elevated to the path of poverty which is the path of Sufism, reject the desire of your carnal soul concerning what it chooses for itself from forms of worship and vanities of pious actions, unless the shaykh has ordered this for it. And distance yourself from the soul’s desire in this regard as you would distance yourself from evil. He means that the welfare of the novice is in what the shaykh chooses for him, not in what he chooses for himself. If it’s the novice who chooses, he’ll perish.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that so many novices have fallen due to this matter because if the carnal soul of the novice, before he’s received illumination, chooses to increase works of supererogation, fasting and nocturnal vigils, this may well occur because of lust for reputation and hypocrisy. Thus his action is for other than God—He is mighty and glorious! But if God shows him mercy by means of a shaykh who provides training and God unites the novice with him, the shaykh will see this as an illness in him and want to remove him from it. If the novice acquiesces and favor from God the Sublime has been preordained, the shaykh will show the novice what’s worthy of him and transfer him to a situation that pleases God the Sublime. If the novice doesn’t acquiesce and says: ‘We’ve come for him to give us increase but he’s diminishing us’, his intention (*niyya*) with regard to the shaykh of training is lost. Indeed, Satan has overwhelmed this person and the sickness of hypocrisy and depravity dominates him. We all ask God for protection and well-being—through His grace and His bounty!

Here let’s relate the story of the individuals among the Companions—God be pleased with them—who went to the Prophet’s house—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and questioned his wives about his worship as well as his nocturnal vigils

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<sup>21</sup> (16)=(*Rāʾiyya* 11, p. 18)

and his fasting. The wives told the Companions what his worship consisted of (126) and the Companions considered it to be very little. They said: 'We aren't like the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Indeed, he's a bondsman whose former and latter sins God has forgiven.' Then one of them said: 'As for me, I fast all the time.' Another said: 'As for me, I stay up the whole night and don't sleep.' And another said: 'As for me, I'm not intimate with women.' Then they departed and the Prophet arrived after them, and °Ā'isha—God be pleased with her—informed him about what she saw of them and what they said. The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—then called them and said to them:

'As for me, I'm the most godfearing among you, the most pious among you and the most knowledgeable about God among you. And I fast and break the fast, I stay up at night and I sleep, and I'm intimate with women. Now whoever dislikes my habitual practice (*sunna*) isn't one of my own.' And God the Sublime sent down: 'Oh believers, don't forbid the good things God has permitted you and don't transgress. Verily, God doesn't love the transgressors' (5/87).

The transmitters [of this *ḥadīth*] disagree in designating these Companions. Some count among them °Uthmān b. Maẓ°ūn, °Abd Allāh b. Mas°ūd and Abū Hurayra. And some count among them Sa°d b. Abī Waqqāṣ.<sup>22</sup> Others count among them °Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and °Abd Allāh b. °Amr b. (127) al-°Āṣ. And others count among them Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq. God be pleased with them!

So look—God give you success—at how the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—directed them away from the wayward desire of their carnal souls with regard to increasing works of supererogation toward what he wanted and chose for them, namely the middle course in matters. This is the greatest testimony concerning what shaykhs do with the successful novices. As for other novices, there's nothing to say about them.

I saw how a man came to a shaykh—God be pleased with him—and wished to take him as an intermediary [with God], and the man was engaged with very great amounts of worship. He'd even perform a complete recitation of the Qur°ān throughout the whole of the night and recite the *Dalā' il al-khayrāt*<sup>23</sup> during the day several times over. He fasted continuously and whenever you met him he was of sallow complexion, as if he was one of the dead in their graves. Now the shaykh—God be pleased with him—went on changing him stage by stage from one situation to another until he directed him to the

<sup>22</sup> *Wāfi* XV, p. 144, no. 199.

<sup>23</sup> See p. 127, fn. 50.

halting-station of the middle course. The shaykh—God be pleased with him—then said to him one day: ‘Oh So-and-so, how many burdens God has released you from!’ And he replied: ‘God reward you on our part with what’s good, oh Sayyidī. Our actions were hypocrisy and we were performing worship for other than God, and God has released us from that thanks to your blessing.’

The Shaykh said to me one day—God be pleased with him: ‘If a person doesn’t perform these works of supererogation, he won’t be called to account in the hereafter. Yet if he performs them with the intention of having people observe him and praise him for them, he’ll be punished in the hereafter because of them and his father’s house will become desolate.’ I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is because hypocrisy is a [grave] sin.

And I heard al-Dabbāgh say—God be pleased with him: ‘The beloved is only free of hypocrisy and seeking reputation if every moment he sees that his actions are created by God the Sublime and he isn’t forgetful of this while engaged in the action. Whenever he’s forgetful of it—even if only for the blinking of an eye—he falls into hypocrisy, the pursuit of reputation, and conceit.’

Then the author of the *Rā’iyya* says:

‘Place it like a child on the shaykh’s lap.

It mustn’t leave the lap and restriction without weaning.’<sup>24</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘That is to say, place your carnal soul on the lap (*hijr*) of your shaykh who trains you like a child on its mother’s lap. And your carnal soul isn’t to leave the shaykh’s lap and his imposing restrictions before being weaned of the training. Now the first *h-j-r* (*hijr*) is the well-known lap which is the front part of the shirt, whereas (128) the second *h-j-r* (*hajr*) means prohibition, that is to say the shaykh’s prohibiting the novice from what he wants. [The legal term] *hajr* among the jurists comes from this second *h-j-r* and means imposing restrictions [on minors, the insane, etc.]. The first *h-j-r* is a figurative expression for the shaykh’s supervision and his power of free disposal. The second is a figurative expression for the shaykh’s prohibiting the novice from what’s unworthy of him.<sup>25</sup> But God the Sublime knows best!’

Then he says:

‘Whoever can’t be described as stripped of will

Shouldn’t hope for a whiff of poverty’s aroma.’<sup>26</sup>

<sup>24</sup> (17)=(*Rā’iyya* 12, p. 18)

<sup>25</sup> On these meanings cf. Lane s.v.

<sup>26</sup> (18)=(*Rā’iyya* 13, p. 20)

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘Whoever among the novices doesn’t have the quality of being stripped of his will before his shaykh who provides him with training shouldn’t hope to catch a whiff of the aroma of poverty. We beseech God for protection from this!’

Then he says:

‘Though this matter is something rare to find,  
Where there’s firm resolve it isn’t difficult.’<sup>27</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: “‘This matter”, i.e. the fact that the whiff of poverty’s aroma is attached to stripping away the will, even if it’s rare and almost non-existent, where there’s resolve to do so, it isn’t difficult and impossible. He means that, on the contrary, because of the resolve to do so, it’s possible. And “firm resolve” is the determination to do something impossible.’

Then the author of the *Rāʾiyya* says the verses that were cited earlier: ‘The shaykh possesses signs’ up to where he says:

‘He who guards against her looking at anyone else  
Says to the palace beloved: “Don’t go out at night!”’

After that he says:

‘Don’t oppose him one day. For indeed,  
This is guaranteed to scatter the novice in flight.’<sup>28</sup>

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘Never oppose your shaykh. Opposition to the shaykh is guaranteed to scatter the novice—the novice who opposes him—from his Lord and from his religion. The shaykh will abandon (129) him and turn away from him and drive him away from associating with him. In the verse “one day” means the moment and time he’s in. Opposition is equivalent to the word “rejection”.’

\* \* \*

And know—God give you success—that I found the above explanations of these verses written in the Shaykh’s handwriting—God be pleased with him—in a copy of the *Rāʾiyya*. I didn’t hear them from him [in person] but they were written down, without any doubt and ambiguity, in the script of his own noble hand. For this reason I’ve attributed them to him—God be pleased with him—even though the science of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—is greater, indeed superior to all of this. I wished to recite this *qaṣīda* to him—God be pleased with him—so I’d then hear from him Lordly secrets and lights of divine knowledge in the explanation of it, as was his usual practice—God be pleased with him!

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<sup>27</sup> (19)=(*Rāʾiyya* 14, p. 22)

<sup>28</sup> (20)=(*Rāʾiyya* 29, p. 43)



There were other verses connected with this subject which the Shaykh didn't comment on—God be pleased with him! I had resolved to write them down without a commentary. However, it then seemed better to me to write them down and to explain them as far as possible, though not at great length and in detail.

The author of the *Rāʿiyya* says:

‘One who opposes and whose science is withdrawn  
Sees defect in perfection itself without realizing it.’<sup>29</sup>

That is to say, someone who opposes the shaykh or anyone else among the people of the path while being ignorant, sees perfection as deficiency and inverts affairs without his knowing it. The basis for this verse goes back to the author of the *ʿAwārif al-maʿārif* (*Gifts of Divine Insights*)<sup>30</sup> where he says: ‘Whenever the novice experiences difficulty with something to do with the shaykh’s state, he must recall the story of Moses and al-Khaḍir—peace be upon them—i.e. how al-Khaḍir did things which Moses disapproved of—peace be upon him! But when al-Khaḍir informed him about the secret behind it, Moses dropped his disapproval. Whatever the novice disapproves of is due to the lack of his science concerning the reality that’s present with the shaykh. In every matter the shaykh is excused on the basis of science and wisdom.’<sup>31</sup> The *Rāʿiyya* is a resumé of the *ʿAwārif* and it, i.e. the *ʿAwārif*, constitutes the foundation of the *Rāʿiyya*.

(130) And Abūʿl-Ḥasan al-Shushtarī<sup>32</sup> says—God be pleased with him: ‘One mustn’t oppose shaykhs in what they do, for when they act it’s only with permission and deeper insight. They aren’t among those who fall into the category of the first world, I mean the world of the veil, i.e. those who don’t long for the world of the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*), and their minds aren’t exclusively infatuated with appearances. Rather they’re with them but not with them. What they do and omit to do, their bodies and their words, their tongue and the letters they pronounce—all of this bears similarity to men at large, yet they’re concealed from them in another way. Only a person who’s one of them knows what they’re connected with and engaged in.’ But God knows best!

Then he says:

‘Whoever disagrees with his shaykh about his belief

<sup>29</sup> (21)=(*Rāʿiyya* 30, p. 44); cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 16, ll. -12 to -9.

<sup>30</sup> *ʿIbrīziana*, p. 146, CVIII.

<sup>31</sup> From *ʿAwārif*, p. 409, ll. -5 to -2/*Gaben*, p. 355, 51.16.

<sup>32</sup> *ʿIbrīziana*, p. 146, CVIX.

Will linger in the blaze of live coals due to disapproval.’<sup>33</sup>

This means that the shaykh is correct in his action and believes that what’s right is contained in that action. Now if the novice believes that what’s correct is like the belief of his shaykh, he profits and meets with success. If he contradicts his shaykh regarding his belief and believes that his shaykh is mistaken in that action, without a doubt he’ll end up being separated from his shaykh. Separation from the shaykh is figuratively expressed as ‘the blaze of live coals’, i.e. due to disapproval he’ll remain in separation from the shaykh which is like the blaze of live coals.

Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-<sup>c</sup>Arabī says—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s a precondition that the novice believe that his shaykh follows a proper path from his Lord and a clear proof from Him, and that he doesn’t weigh the shaykh’s states with his own scales. It may be that a form emerges from the shaykh which is outwardly reprehensible but which is praiseworthy inwardly and in reality. It’s the novice’s duty to acquiesce. For how many a man has taken hold of a cup of wine in his hand, raised it to his mouth but God changed it into honey inside his mouth! The observer saw him drink wine but he drank nothing but honey. And there are many things like this. Indeed, we’ve seen someone body forth his spirit-being (*rūḥāniyya*)<sup>34</sup> in a [visible] form and make it undertake a particular action. Those present saw it do the action and they said: “We saw So-and-so do such-and-such.” And yet he’s (131) dissociated from the action. Such were the states of Abū <sup>c</sup>Abd Allāh al-Mawṣilī, known as Qaḍīb al-Bān.<sup>35</sup> We’ve beheld this several times in certain individuals.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that in the preceding chapter the Shaykh’s words on this subject—God be pleased with him—are more brilliant and more abundant than these. Consult them there. But God knows best!

Then he says:

‘An intelligent person is content with no one but him

Though he’s far from truth like night from bright dawn.’<sup>36</sup>

This means that whoever possesses a sound mind and an upright nature is satisfied with no one but his shaykh and goes about with him wherever he goes, even if on the level of appearances he’s clearly removed from the truth like the distance of the night from

<sup>33</sup> (22)=(*Rā’iyya* 31, p. 44 bot.)

<sup>34</sup> On *rūḥāniyya* cf. NkG, p. 54.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw. II*, pp. 277 f.; died *circa* 570/1174.

<sup>36</sup> (23)=(*Rā’iyya* 32, p. 45)

dawn. Thus the novice says: 'The shaykh surely has an upright explanation for this which God will perhaps inform me about.'

I heard our Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'If the novice encounters some of these matters that issue from shaykhs and contradict appearances and the novice thinks well of his shaykh, God the Sublime will acquaint him with the secrets behind them when He bestows illumination on him.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would point out that in the Shaykh's words presented earlier—God be pleased with him—there are many stories about sincere novices. Consult the chapter that precedes this one. But God knows best!

Then he says:

'Don't recognize anyone else in the shaykh's presence  
And don't fill an eye with an askance look.'<sup>37</sup>

'An askance look' is a look to the right and to the left or it's a look of an angry person out of the corner of the eye or a look of indulgence. There are different views about this. The first appropriate view is that this is a look at someone other than the shaykh and it's as if he says: 'Don't recognize anyone else in the shaykh's presence', i.e. in the place where he sits. 'And in his presence don't look at that other person, to the right or to the left.' Thus it's as if he forbids acquaintance with that other person (132) and turning toward him. But according to the second and the third meaning of 'an askance look', the person being looked at is the shaykh of training himself. Thus it's as if he says: 'Don't recognize anyone else in the shaykh's presence and don't look at your shaykh with a look of anger. Nor look at him with a look containing indulgence'—as if the novice is overlooking or treating with indulgence something the shaykh has done. However, both these ideas aren't in agreement with the wording. Here the sincere novice is addressed who follows around his shaykh wherever he goes. He's being told: 'If you reach this halting-station, don't recognize anyone else but your shaykh. Consequently, it isn't appropriate that he be told: 'Don't become angry with your shaykh.' Rather what's appropriate for him to be told is: 'Don't turn toward anyone besides your shaykh.' For the meaning of this rule of behavior is concentration on the shaykh and immersion in him, obedience to him and absence in his innermost secret (*sirr*) so that this relation with the shaykh results in the same things for him with God the Sublime.

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<sup>37</sup> (24)=(*Rāʾiyya* 33, p. 47)

For every rule the novice follows with the shaykh results in the same thing for him with God—He is mighty and glorious!

.....

And know that this proper behavior doesn't arise from the novice as long as there isn't an inner attraction for him on the part of the shaykh. If the rays of the shaykh's love for the novice connect with the novice, this love binds him to the shaykh and protects him from everything that causes separation. If it continues, the connection continues, whereas if it break off, severance occurs. That's why a certain shaykh said to a novice of his who'd attended upon him diligently and performed the five ritual prayers with him, never being absent from him at any time—and the novice thought this was because of his love for the shaykh, not because of the shaykh's love for him—: 'Do you love me, oh So-and-so?' The novice replied: 'Oh Sayyidī, because of my love for you this connection has occurred.' At that the shaykh said to him: 'Now you'll learn!' From that moment he was incapable of reaching the shaykh until a whole year passed without his being able to see his shaykh, let alone attend upon him. But the shaykh eventually pardoned him and forgave him.

And one day a shaykh said to his disciples: 'Do you love me?' They replied: 'Yes, oh Sayyidī. There's nothing more dear to us than you.' He then said to them: 'And do I love you?' They replied: 'We don't know.' He said: 'You haven't brought forth anything [intelligent]. My love for you came first. When its lights shone upon you, your love for me was produced.'

As for the disciples of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—from the time they became acquainted with him, their hearts grew cold with regard to knowing anyone else and paying anyone else a visit of respect. Some of them even felt blocked from doing this.

One of his disciples recounted to me that he went to visit the Shaykh and some people met him on his way. (133) They asked him to come with them to visit the grave of the well-known upright Friend of God, Sayyidī Qāsim Abū ʿUsriyya.<sup>38</sup> He related: 'I felt intimidated and went with them but my heart was cold with regard to paying him a visit of respect. When I arrived at his tomb, I was afflicted with a pain in the stomach. I spent the night inside the tomb and the pain increased so that it distracted me from paying my respects. When I came forth from the tomb with the arrival of day, the pain disappeared and it was as if it was nothing.' He related:

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38 Unidentified.

‘And the same thing happened to me another time. Then I realized this was due to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that it was the Shaykh’s habitual practice with his disciples—God be pleased with him—to inform them about everything that happened to them along the way when they set out to visit him. He even informed them about what they said among themselves and what was in their interiors. Something even stronger than that happened to one of the Shaykh’s disciples—God be pleased with him! This was that he had felt impeded from visiting [the graves of] the godly during a period of almost seven years before coming to know the Shaykh. He fell into despair and thought that this was wretchedness and cruelty. But then he went to someone who was reputed to be endowed with goodness and he said to him: ‘Oh Sayyidī, paying visits of respect to the godly is burdensome for me.’ The man replied to him: ‘It’s you who are burdensome on them.’ This only added further to his despair.

Next he went to another man reputed for possessing goodness and he complained to him about this. The man replied to him: ‘Sometimes the Friend may be in the presence of God the Sublime and then his spirit isn’t in the courtyards of the tombs. Other times he may not be in the divine presence and then his spirit is in the courtyards of the tombs. Perhaps when you go to his grave, it’s when he’s in the divine presence and his spirit isn’t in his tomb so that you can experience intimacy with him. That’s why you experienced being forsaken and the state is burdensome for you.’ Thus he lightened the matter for him with these words but the disciple said: ‘If whenever I go to pay a visit of respect to a Friend of God, I find his spirit isn’t in the courtyard of the tomb, this is a penchant for wretchedness in me that hasn’t ceased up to the present moment.’

Thus when God—He is blessed and sublime—brought him together with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—his most important concern was to ask him about this matter. He said: ‘Oh Sayyidī, visiting the godly to pay my respects is very burdensome for me. I complained to Sayyidī So-and-so and he replied to me such-and-such. What do you have to say to me [about this]—God be pleased with you!’

(134) Then fixing his gaze on a bouquet of roses hanging in a shop, the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—replied to the man: ‘Surely if the owner of this bouquet offered it to everybody to turn over and touch with his hands, it would become spoiled. It would wither and dry out. What’s correct and most suitable regarding it is to keep it from everybody.’ The disciple said: ‘I realized that I’d

been stopped from paying visits of respect to anyone besides the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—for years before I came to know him.’

And another story occurred and this is that a man [who would later be] among the Shaykh’s disciples—God be pleased with him—believed there was goodness in one of the men of distinction and loved him very much, visiting him frequently. He maintained association (*suhba*) with him for nearly seven years until love for him permeated his hair and his skin, his flesh and his bones, so that it filled his body from his head to his toes. After the death of this shaykh, he resolved never to acknowledge anyone other than him because he believed he was without equal. He said: ‘Then God brought me together with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! I remained with him only a moment but when I rose to leave him, the love connected with that dead person had entirely disappeared.’ It had left his whole body completely and from that moment he was never again able to visit that shaykh in his grave.

He then questioned the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—saying: ‘Oh Sayyidī, I’ve had a strange experience. I used to love Sayyidī So-and-so with a love that can’t be qualified and described. I was resolved that no one would ever replace him. But when I sat with you for only a moment, that love completely disappeared. And it goes without saying that during that moment we didn’t turn our attention to this shaykh and no mention was made of him, nor did we discuss things that might cause the love for him to be eradicated.’

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘That shaykh was sincere and one of the Friends of God the Sublime and you were sincere in your love for him. But the love between the two of you had no foundation you could dwell upon.’ Next he formulated a similitude for him, saying: ‘It’s like with a small child who has a father but God separates him from his father. Another man then takes him on and starts raising him (*tarbiya*). The boy grows up and only sees the man who’s been raising him. So he calls him “my father” and feels affection toward him the way a boy feels affection toward his father. This goes on for nearly seven years. Then his father arrives, the father whose son he is and from whose loins he springs. He finds the boy sitting in the courtyard of the house of the man who’s raised him. He stands before him for a moment and then walks past him. But now all the veins of that boy are swept away with his father from whose loins he springs. Nothing of them remains with the man who raised him and in (135) his heart no one can occupy the place of his real father, even if before that he thought

the man who raised him was his father.' The disciple said: 'By God, with this similitude he eradicated the drops of that love which remained in my heart and severed it from its root.'

Now this is what the state of the great men is like—God be pleased with them—and so it's been said: 'Novices are like the ewers of the bathhouse and these are for whoever grabs hold of them.' And it's been said: 'The shaykh who becomes angry because his novice leaves him and goes over to someone else is weak and sterile. It's because of his weakness and his sterility that his novice goes over to someone else.'

How many times the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—went to visit [the shrine of] one of the godly men and a group of his disciples came forth with him—God bestow success upon them—and they said to him: 'You're our goal and you're the one whom we pay visits of respect. Our going to Sayyidi So-and-so is out of compliance with you and intimacy with your person (*dhāt*). But you're our goal, whether you visit Sayyidi So-and-so or someone else.'

And when the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—reached the grave of the Friend of God he sought, he'd proceed on his own or take along one person from his disciples to accompany him. The remainder of the disciples felt satisfied and self-sufficient with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and they believed that no one from among the people of his day and age could match him, nor could anyone from among the dead who lived before him. They gave no one precedence over him except our lords the Companions of the Prophet. Thus they acknowledged no one but the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—whether the Shaykh was present or absent, whether during his life or after his demise.

And when the Shaykh died—God be pleased with him—I took it upon myself to go to visit his grave frequently. He then stood before me in a dream and said to me: 'Verily, my person (*dhāt*) isn't cut off in the grave but it's in the whole world filling and occupying it. In whatever place you seek me you'll find me. Even if you were to go to a pillar in the mosque and you sought my mediation with God—He is mighty and glorious—I'd be with you at that time.' Then he pointed to all the world and said: 'I'm in the whole of it. Wherever you seek me you'll find me. But beware of thinking I'm your Lord—He is mighty and glorious! For your Lord—He is mighty and glorious—isn't confined to the world but I'm confined to it.' This is what I heard from him in the dream—God be pleased with him!

Similarly, during his lifetime I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Verily, sometimes the whole world is inside my

abdomen.' At other times I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'In the eye of the believing bondsman the seven heavens (136) and the seven earths are no more than a ring of metal cast into the open countryside.' Likewise, 'the shaykh's presence' referred to in the words: 'Don't recognize anyone else in the shaykh's presence' necessarily varies in accordance with the halting-stations of the shaykhs—God be pleased with them! Thus the presence of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—comprises the whole world. But God knows best!

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Then he says:

'Never speak in front of him. But if he calls you  
To do so, don't digress and talk nonsense.'<sup>39</sup>

He means—but God knows best—: 'At no time speak in your shaykh's presence. On the other hand, if he asks you about something, don't digress from the required answer and go on talking with prolixity and long-windedness. This is belittling to the shaykh's dignity.' Such is the case—but God knows best—as long as the shaykh doesn't demand prolixity from him. If he demands prolixity from him and the shaykh has some purpose in this, it's incumbent on him to speak in detail and at great length out of consideration for the shaykh's inclination. However, when he sees that the shaykh has had his fill of words, he must return to his proper behavior. Earlier it was mentioned<sup>40</sup> what the Shaykh used to say to us—God be pleased with him—when he was absent in vision (*mushāhada*), namely: 'Roar at me very much, for God will surely reward you for it'—because this is how he'd regain his senses.

The basis for what the verse says goes back to the author of the 'Awārif [i.e. al-Suhrawardī]. After recounting the interpretations of God the Sublime's words: 'Don't advance before God and His Apostle' (49/1), he says in this work: 'The verse was sent down to people present at the gathering of the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him! If the Apostle—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was asked about something, they'd take up the matter and come forward with opinions and judgements. They were then prohibited from doing this.'<sup>41</sup>

And so it is with the proper behavior of the novice in the shaykh's gathering. He must maintain silence and say nothing in his presence, not even good words, unless the shaykh consults him in this and he

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<sup>39</sup> (25)=(*Rā'iyya* 34, p. 49)

<sup>40</sup> See p. 676.

<sup>41</sup> From 'Awārif, p. 404, ll. 3-5/*Gaben*, p. 350, 51.2.



finds (137) the shaykh gives him permission.<sup>42</sup> The novice's situation in the presence of the shaykh is like that of someone seated on the shore of the ocean waiting for nourishment to be brought to him. His waiting expectantly to hear something and for nourishment by means of the shaykh's words fulfills the halting-station of his discipleship, his striving and his desire for increase from God the Sublime's bounty. On the other hand, his waiting expectantly to speak drives him from the halting-station of striving and desire for increase to the halting-station of affirming something merely for the sake of it. And that's an offense on the novice's part.

The novice's concern should be for what's obscure in his state so as to uncover it by questioning the shaykh, though a sincere person has no need of questioning with the tongue in the shaykh's presence. Instead, the shaykh takes the initiative regarding what the novice wants because the shaykh draws his speech from the True. For when the sincere are on hand, he elevates his heart to God the Sublime and prays for [spiritual] rain and water on their behalf. In talk and speech his tongue and his heart are engaged with the immediately important in the states of the seekers who need what's been disclosed to him.<sup>43</sup>

Then the author says: 'As for what God—He is sublime and exalted—causes to occur on his tongue, the shaykh is a listener just like one of the [other] listeners.<sup>44</sup>

The shaykh Abū Sa'ūd<sup>45</sup>—God have mercy on him—used to tell the disciples what came to him as inspiration. He'd say: "As far as these words, I'm a listener just like any one of you." A disciple who was present found this hard to understand and said: "If the speaker knows what he's saying, how can he be a listener?" And he then returned to his home. That night he beheld a dream. It was as if someone said to him: (138) "Doesn't the diver dive into the sea to seek pearls, and return with oysters in his sack? He has the pearls with him but he doesn't see them until he comes out of the sea. Whoever is on the shore sees the pearls at the same time he does." Due to the dream he understood the shaykh's point about this. So the best rule of behavior for the novice with the shaykh is to remain silent, calm and still until the shaykh takes the initiative and tells him what's in his interest to say and do.<sup>46</sup> But God knows best!

<sup>42</sup> From 'Awārif, p. 404, ll. 5-10/*Gaben*, p. 350, 51.2-3.

<sup>43</sup> From: 'The novice's situation in the presence of the shaykh...' = 'Awārif, p. 404, ll. 11-16/*Gaben*, p. 351, 51.3.

<sup>44</sup> From 'Awārif, p. 405, ll. 2-3/*Gaben*, p. 351, 51.4

<sup>45</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* II, p. 208, no. 404; a contemporary of Ibn al-'Arabī.

<sup>46</sup> From 'Awārif, p. 405, ll. 3-10/*Gaben*, p. 351, 51.5.

Then the author of the *Rāʾiyya* says:

‘Don’t raise your voice above his voice.

And don’t shout loudly like they shout in the desert.’<sup>47</sup>

He means—but God knows best—: ‘Oh novices, don’t raise your voices above the shaykh’s voice. That’s an offense against proper behavior. And when speaking, don’t shout the way the dwellers in the desert and the steppes shout. Their manner is rough and boorish. But revere the shaykh and treat him with deference and say: “Oh my lord, oh my master and oh Friend of God, etc.”’ The basis for these words is the noble Qurʾānic verse: ‘Oh believers, don’t raise your voices above the Prophet’s voice and don’t be loud in your speech to him the way you’re loud to one another, lest your works be of no avail and you’re unaware’ (49/2).

Al-Suhrawardī says in the *ʿAwārif*—God be pleased with him: ‘God the Sublime’s words: “Don’t raise your voices above the Prophet’s voice” belong to His education of the Companions of the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Thābit b. Qays b. Shammās<sup>48</sup> had a deafness in his ear and he had a strong voice. When he spoke, his voice was very loud. Sometimes he spoke to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the Prophet was offended by his voice. So God sent down the Qurʾānic verse as a form of education for him and for others.’<sup>49</sup> Then after mentioning [other] reports about what caused the verse to be sent down and that it was sent because of a dispute in the Prophet’s presence between Abū Bakr and ʿUmar—God be pleased with them—al-Suhrawardī says: ‘Subsequently, when ʿUmar spoke in the Prophet’s presence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—what he said was inaudible and one had to inquire about it. And it’s been said: “When the Qurʾānic verse came down, Abū Bakr swore he’d only speak before the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—as if he were communicating the greatest secret.”’

(139) Now this is the way the novice must be with his shaykh. He mustn’t raise his voice in expansiveness and laugh and talk loudly, unless the shaykh speaks openly with him. Raising the voice is tantamount to throwing off the robe of fidelity. If dignity resides in the heart, it places fetters on the tongue. And the interior of some novices acquires so much respect and dignity from the shaykh that their gazing at the shaykh can’t be sated.’<sup>50</sup>

47 (26)=(*Rāʾiyya* 35, p. 50)

48 *Usd al-ghāba* I, p. 275, no. 569.

49 From *ʿAwārif*, p. 405, l. -3 to p. 406, l. 2/*Gaben*, p. 352, 51.7.

50 From *ʿAwārif*, p. 406, ll. 11-18/*Gaben*, p. 352, 51.8-9.

Then al-Suhrawardī adds: ‘Concerning God’s words: “Don’t raise your voices”, Ibn ‘Aṭā<sup>51</sup> says: “He imposed restraint on what’s most lowly lest anyone proceed to what’s greater in this regard.” Sahl [al-Tustarī]<sup>52</sup> says: “Don’t address him except to ask him about something.” And Abū Bakr b. Ṭāhir<sup>53</sup> says: “Don’t take the initiative to speak to him first and only answer him within the bounds of respect.” “And don’t be loud in your speech to him the way you’re loud to one another” (49/2)—that is to say, don’t use coarse speech when addressing him. Furthermore, don’t call him by his name: “Oh Muḥammad, oh Aḥmad” the way you call one another, but show him respect and deference. Say: “Oh Prophet of God, oh Apostle of God”—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

This is how the novice addresses the shaykh. If proper reserve resides in the heart, speech of this kind appears on the tongue. When carnal souls are engaged in love of children and wives, and the wayward desires of the souls and temperaments are firmly established, they bring forth from the tongue strange utterances which are the fashioning of “the moment” of the souls, utterances formed by the carnal soul’s love and passion. If the heart is filled with respect (140) and proper reserve, the tongue learns proper expression.<sup>54</sup>

Then he relates how Thābit b. Qays—God be pleased with him—applied the Qur’ānic verse to himself when it came down, and what the Apostle of God testified—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—about Thābit, namely that he’d have a happy life and die a martyr’s death and enter Paradise, and that these words of God the Sublime that came down were for him: ‘Surely those who lower their voices in the presence of the Apostle of God’ (49/3), as well as his martyrdom and his last testament [communicated] after death and Abū Bakr’s sanctioning it—God be pleased with him! After that he says: ‘This is a miracle that manifested itself on Thābit’s behalf due to his outstanding fear of God and his proper behavior with the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! So let the sincere novice learn and realize that the shaykh is a reminder of God the Sublime and His Apostle, and that what he takes as his goal with the shaykh is an equivalent of what he’d have taken as his goal with the Apostle of God if he’d lived in the time of the Apostle of God—

<sup>51</sup> I.e. Aḥmad b. ‘Aṭā; on his life cf. Gramlich *Abu l-‘Abbās b. ‘Aṭā*, pp. 1 ff.; died most probably 309/922.

<sup>52</sup> See p. 629, fn. 15.

<sup>53</sup> On him cf. Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 95, no. 64.

<sup>54</sup> From ‘*Awārif*, p. 406, l. -2 to p. 407, l. 5/*Gaben*, p. 353, 51.10.

God's blessings and peace be upon him! So when the people fulfilled their duty to behave properly, God reported about their state and praised them. God the Sublime said: "They are the ones whose hearts God has tested for pious fear" (49/3). That is to say, He purified their hearts and put them to the test the way gold is tested by fire and its purity is obtained. Now the tongue is the interpreter of the heart and speech becomes refined when the heart is refined. And this is how the novice should be with the shaykh.

Abū ʿUthmān<sup>55</sup> says: "Good behavior with great men and in the gathering of eminent Friends of God causes one to attain the highest degrees and what's good in this world and in the hereafter. For didn't God the Sublime say: 'If they had patience until you came forth to them, that would be better for them' (49/5).—?"<sup>56</sup>

Then after discussing God's words: 'Surely those who call out to you when you're inside the apartments, most of them have no understanding' (49/4), (141) al-Suhrawardī says: 'And this contains instruction for the novice on how to enter before the shaykh and approach him, and on avoiding haste and having patience until the shaykh comes forth from his place of retreat.'<sup>57</sup>

Then the author of the *Rāʾiyya* says:

'And don't raise your voice laughing in his presence.

Any other ugliness is less. So pursue it instead!'<sup>58</sup>

ʿIyād<sup>59</sup> says: 'Laughter is a situation involving change which is caused by joy. It overwhelms one. The arteries of the heart expand and blood flows through them and spreads to all the body's arteries. For this reason heat arises that causes the face to brighten and the mouth to become narrow and to open. This is smiling. But if the joy increases and becomes extreme and a person can't control himself, he bursts out laughing.' In other words, don't raise your voice in laughter when you're with the shaykh. Of all the things that have previously been censured and prohibited, there's nothing uglier than raising one's voice in laughter in the shaykh's presence. That is to say, it's uglier than everything else.

As for the word: '*fa-staqri* (so pursue)' with a *qāf*, which comes from *al-istiqrāʾ* and occurs in some manuscripts, it means pursue the reprehensible things, for you'll find that this matter is above them all in ugliness. In some manuscripts the word occurs with an *ʿayn*, i.e.

55 Abū ʿUthmān al-Ḥirī; on him cf. Gramlich, *Sendscheiben*, p. 68, no. 24.

56 From ʿAwārif, p. 407, l. 11 to p. 408, ll. -1/*Gaben*, p. 353 f., 51.13.

57 From ʿAwārif, p. 409, ll. 7-8/*Gaben* p. 355, 51.13.

58 (27)=(*Rāʾiyya* 36, p. 52)

59 Qādī ʿIyād; on him see p. 328, fn. 234.

'*fa-sta<sup>c</sup>ri*, coming from *al-isti<sup>c</sup>rā'*, which means seeking to strip oneself of this reprehensible thing, that is to say: 'Be rid of this thing and abandon it!'

And in the '*Awārīf* [it says]: 'Knowing balance when it comes to laughter is difficult. And laughter is one of the characteristics of a human being that distinguishes him from the category of animals. Moreover, there's no laughter unless amazement first takes place. Amazement calls forth thought and thought is a human being's honor and his distinguishing characteristic. Knowledge of a balanced view about laughter is a matter for someone whose foot is firmly planted in science. Thus it's said: "Be wary of very much laughter for it kills the heart." It's also said: "Much laughter is a kind of foolishness." And it's reported that Jesus said: "God detests someone who laughs much without astonishment and a person who walks a great deal without a purpose."'60

Al-Suhrawardī then says: 'Abū Ḥanīfa—God have mercy on him—classified (142) loud laughter during the prayers as a sin and ruled that a ritual ablution is nullified because of it. He said: "We judge it to be an offense equivalent to leaving without fulfilling one's duty."'61

Then the author of the *Rā'iyya* says:

'Don't sit cross-legged in front of him,

Nor with a bared leg. Be quick to cover it.'62

The meaning is obvious. Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī<sup>63</sup> says—God be pleased with him: 'It belongs to the guidance of the religious scholars when they sit that one of them gathers in his limbs when seated and raises his knees. Another sits on his heels and rests his elbows on his knees. This constituted good behavior for everyone who specially spoke about this (143) science (Sufism) from the era of the Companions of the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and from the time of al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī—he was the first who spoke on this science and set tongues going about it—up to the time of Abū'l-Qāsim al-Junayd<sup>64</sup>—before the appearance of chairs.

Likewise, we've received reports about the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—that he squatted on his heels and kept his legs drawn up with his arms. And according to

60 From '*Awārīf*, p. 259, ll. 13-16/*Gaben*, p. 235, 30.53.

61 From '*Awārīf*, p. 259, ll. 18-19/*Gaben*, p. 235, 30.53.

62 (28)=(*Rā'iyya* 37, p. 52)

63 On al-Makkī see *Nahrung* I, Einleitung.

64 On him cf. Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 66, no. 23.

another report, he sat on his heels and placed his hands on his knees.' Then he says: 'But those who sit cross-legged are the grammarians, the lexicographers and the worldly-minded *muftīs*. This is how the arrogant sit. The sign of humility is to sit with one's limbs gathered together.'<sup>65</sup>

The novice has a good example in the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and those who came after him among the ascetic religious scholars with knowledge of God and certainty.

Then the author of the *Rā'iyya* says:

'Don't roll out the prayer-rug in his presence.

There's no purpose for the pious servant but striving.

The Sufi's prayer-rug is the house he finds rest in.

Nor is there any nest but one flies forth from it.'<sup>66</sup>

He means—but God knows best: 'Oh novice, don't roll out a prayer-rug and sit on it in the shaykh's presence. This is contrary to your purpose. For your purpose is serving the shaykh, seeing to his affairs, and devoting yourself to his needs and his concerns. Being engaged in sitting on the prayer-rug implies seeking repose and instills the delusion of being equal to the shaykh in rank. The proper place for the Sufi's prayer-rug is the house he dwells in, not his shaykh's gathering. Rather in his shaykh's gathering he must adopt humility, a feeling of being small, and engagement in rendering service.' In his words: 'Nor is there any nest but one flies forth from it', nest (*wakr*) means the nest (*'ushsh*) where a bird seeks refuge. Here he applies it to the shaykh's gathering where the novices seek refuge.

(144) The meaning is that just as you have no prayer-rug in the shaykh's presence, so you have no nest with him. That is to say, while with him you don't hold a gathering in which people gather around you and in which faces turn toward you. This constitutes bad behavior toward the shaykh, as well as estrangement and recalcitrance, unless your training is completed and you've attained weaning, and the shaykh has given you permission to undertake training and act independently, and you've become a master who provides training. Then it's alright to hold a gathering but only after separating from the shaykh and leaving him to go to another place. He alludes to this in his words: '...but one flies forth from it.' That is to say, only if his affair is completed and he flies forth from his shaykh and becomes free to act on his own, like the fledgling that's completed its training and is capable of flying. It's then independent

<sup>65</sup> From *Nahrung* I, pp. 523 f., 31.180; the text deviates from the *Qūr*.

<sup>66</sup> (29-30)=(*Rā'iyya* 39, p. 53).

and doesn't need its father. His words: 'There's no purpose for the pious servant but striving' mean that the pious servant who's sincere in his discipleship has no other interest but striving with regard to the shaykh's needs and his concerns.

Al-Suhrawardī says in the *ʿAwārīf*: 'Among the external rules of behavior is that the novice doesn't spread out the prayer-rug in the shaykh's presence, except at the time of ritual prayer. The novice is concerned to be self-denying in service, whereas the prayer-rug is an indication of ease and pride.'<sup>67</sup> After some discussion, he then says in another passage: 'Service is the concern of someone who's entered the convent (*ribāṭ*)<sup>68</sup> as a beginner and hasn't tasted the savor of pious work and isn't mindful of precious states. He's been ordered to undertake service so that his worship becomes service and so that by his good service he attracts to him the hearts of the people of God the Sublime. The blessing (*baraka*) from this will then encompass him and he'll assist the brethren engaged in worship.' And so it continues up to where he says: 'For the Sufis service constitutes virtuous work and is one of the paths of inner experiences (*al-mawājīd*). It leads to their acquiring attractive qualities and good states.'<sup>69</sup>

Then the author of the *Rāʿiyya* says:

'And before you've been weaned, don't wear

The *farajīyya*<sup>70</sup> and act boldly with regard to it.'<sup>71</sup>

(145) He means—but God knows best—: 'Oh novice, as long as you haven't been weaned from the breast-feeding of training and you haven't reached the degree of independent action, you mustn't wear any of the clothing of shaykhs such as the *farajīyya*. This is a well-known garment among them. And *al-mustajrī*<sup>72</sup> is a person who acts boldly with regard to something. Abū ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Muḥammad b. al-Ḥasan al-Sulamī<sup>72</sup> says—God be pleased with him: 'Wearing the *farajīyya* is also disapproved of except for shaykhs, and it occupies the place of the *ṭaylasān*.<sup>73</sup> The prayer-rug and the *ṭaylasān* belong to shaykhs, whereas burnouses belong to novices.'<sup>74</sup> Moreover, this rule is current with regard to all the clothing of

<sup>67</sup> From *ʿAwārīf*, p. 410, l. -2 to p. 411, l. 1/*Gaben*, p. 356, 51.19.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Meier, *Bausteine*, 'Almoraviden', pp. 712 ff./*Essays*, 'Almoravids', pp. 335 ff.

<sup>69</sup> From *ʿAwārīf*, p. 109, l. 17/*Gaben*, p. 111, 14.7.

<sup>70</sup> Cf. Dozy, *Vêtements*, s.v. *farajīyya*.

<sup>71</sup> (31)=(*Rāʿiyya* 40, p. 54)

<sup>72</sup> On the life of al-Sulamī cf. Berger, *Geschieden*, pp. 33 ff.

<sup>73</sup> Information on the *ṭaylasān* in van Ess, *Der Ṭaylasān*.

<sup>74</sup> Not found in al-Sulamī's surviving writings.

shaykhs because the reason is the same, even if the clothing varies according to customary usage.

Then he says:

‘Don’t consider below yourself any believer on earth  
Or any infidel until you’re concealed in the grave.’<sup>75</sup>

He means—but God knows best—: ‘Oh novice, don’t think any believer or infidel on earth has a lower status than yourself or is more humble in rank than yourself before God. Instead, consider the matter the other way round. Maintain that you’re lower than anyone and persist in this attitude until you die.’ Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī said—God be pleased with him: ‘As long as a bondsman thinks someone in creation is more wicked than himself, he behaves with pride.’<sup>76</sup> He was asked: ‘Then when does he behave with humility?’ He replied: ‘When he considers he has no halting-station and no state, and he behaves humbly with everyone according to his knowledge of his Lord and of himself.’

(146) Al-Suhrawardī says in the *‘Awārif*: ‘Yūsuf b. Asbāṭ<sup>77</sup> was asked: “What’s the utmost degree of humility?” He replied: “That you come forth from your house and whomever you meet you consider better than yourself.””<sup>78</sup> [Then al-Suhrawardī says:] ‘And I saw our shaykh Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn Abū’l-Najīb.<sup>79</sup> I was with him on his journey to Syria and one of the men of worldly power sent him some food [transported] on the heads of prisoners from among the Franks and the latter were in chains. When the cloth for the meal was spread out and the prisoners were waiting for the vessels to be free, Ḍiyā’ al-Dīn said to the servant: “Bring the prisoners so they can sit upon the cloth with the men of poverty (*fuqarā’*).” The servant brought them and seated them on the cloth in a single row. Rising from his prayer-rug, the shaykh walked over to them and sat down with them as if he were one of their number. Then he ate and they ate. Visible for us on his face was the humility for the sake of God that had descended within his interior, the humble contrition in his carnal soul, and his having divested himself of pride toward them because of his faith, his religious learning and his works.’<sup>80</sup>

<sup>75</sup> (32)=(*Rā’iyya* 41, p. 55); cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 215, l. -1.

<sup>76</sup> These words=‘*Awārif*, p. 241, ll. -5 f./*Gaben* p. 220, 30.7.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* I, p. 489; died 192/807.

<sup>78</sup> ‘*Awārif*, p. 240, ll. -3 to -1/*Gaben* 220, 30.4.

<sup>79</sup> Uncle of the author of the ‘*Awārif*; *Gaben*, Einleitung, p. 2; died 563/1168.

<sup>80</sup> From the words: ‘I was with him...’, ‘*Awārif*, p. 241, ll. 1-7/*Gaben* p. 220, 30.5.



And the shaykh Abū'l-Hasan °Alī b. °Atīq b. Mu°min al-Qurazī<sup>81</sup> related—God have mercy on him: ‘One day I saw the shaykh and jurist Abū Muḥammad °Abd Allāh b. °Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muqayyad<sup>82</sup> who was one of the scholarly jurists and he was walking along on a wintry day with much rain and mud. A dog met him walking along the same path he was walking on.’ He related: ‘I saw him hug the wall and make room for the dog, stopping and waiting for it to pass by. Only then did he intend to walk on himself. But when the dog drew near to him, I saw him leave the place he was in and descend lower down and let the dog walk on a higher level than himself.’ He related: ‘When the dog went past him, (147) I joined him and I found him in a distressed state. I said: “Oh Sayyidī, I saw you just now. You did something I found very strange. How could you throw yourself in the mud and let the dog walk in the clean place?” He replied to me: “After I’d made a path for it below myself, I reflected and said: ‘I’ve deemed myself to be higher than the dog and set myself above it. Yet, by God, the dog is higher than me and more deserving of respect. After all, I’ve disobeyed God the Sublime and committed many sins, whereas the dog hasn’t committed any sin.’ So I stood down from my place for the dog and let it walk there. Now I’m afraid of being detested by God, unless He forgives me for having elevated myself above someone better than myself.”’

Dhū'l-Nūn<sup>83</sup> said—God be pleased with him: ‘Whoever wishes for humility, let him direct his carnal soul toward the majesty of God. His carnal soul will then dissolve and become small. Whoever looks at God the Sublime’s majesty and His power, the power of his carnal soul will disappear from him, because all carnal souls are small before His awesomeness. If the bondsman acquires humility in this sense, he’ll undoubtedly experience humility before men at large due to seeing their connection with the True—He is exalted!’

This is why al-Suhrawardī says in the °*Awārif*: ‘If the Sufī hasn’t received an allotment of special humility on the carpet of divine proximity, then his allotment of humility toward the people isn’t very large.’<sup>84</sup> But God knows best!

Then the author of the *Rā°iyya* says:

‘For the final outcome is concealed from you

<sup>81</sup> Cf. editor’s ftn., II, p. 146.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> On him cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* I, p. 597; died 245/859-60.

<sup>84</sup> °*Awārif*, p. 245, ll. 3 f./*Gaben*, p. 224, 30.16.

And even the uncorrupted fear God's cunning (*makr*).<sup>85</sup>

In other words, the final outcome is unknown and ignorance about it imposes what was just said, namely that he shouldn't consider anyone below himself. If a person is corrupted, there's no doubt concerning his fear. And if he possesses good works, he's still not safe from God's cunning. Ibn al-°Arabī al-Ḥātimī says—God be pleased with him: 'It belongs to their rules of proper behavior (148) toward God the Sublime—though the person who practices this is rare—that a human being should believe that at all times God possesses glances into the hearts of His bondsmen. By means of these glances He confers on them whatever He wishes from His divine insights (*ma°ārif*) and His subtleties (*laṭā°if*). If while sitting with a person, He should separate from him for a single moment and turn away from him for a single instant and then come back, if the person is prepared to meet Him with service and reverence, perhaps one of His glances will reach him and benefit him. Now if the situation is like this, that is to say if one of those glances reaches him, he's achieved proper behavior toward God. If the situation isn't like this, that is to say if nothing of these glances reaches him, he's [still] behaved properly toward God the Sublime since he treated Him according to what the divine rank requires. This is a rare halting-station which you don't often see someone experience.

Similarly, if they behold a sinner in the midst of his sinning and then he ceases committing the sin, they don't believe he persists in it but they say: "Perhaps he's repented in his innermost secret and perhaps he's one of those whom sin doesn't harm due to the Creator's concern for him with regard to his final outcome." Whoever considers himself better than someone else without knowing his own rank and the rank of the other in terms of the final outcome, not in terms of the moment—such a person is ignorant of God—He is mighty and glorious—and is forsaken without any good in him, no matter what divine insights he's had bestowed on him.'

Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī says—God be pleased with him: 'It belongs to the fear of the knowers of God that they realize that God—He is mighty and glorious—instills fear into the lowest of His bondsmen by making an exemplary warning of whomever He wishes from among His highest bondsmen. And He instills fear into the multitude of His creatures by making an exemplary punishment of some of His elite bondsmen, by way of His wisdom (*ḥikma*) and His ordaining (*ḥukm*). Those in fear are aware that God the Sublime has brought

85 (33)=(*Rā°iyya* 42, p. 58); cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 216, l. 1.

forth a group of godly men (*ṣālihūn*) as an exemplary warning to instill fear by means of them into the believers. And He has made an exemplary warning out of a group of the martyrs (*shuhadā'*) to instill fear into the godly men. And He has brought forth a group of the strictly truthful (*ṣiddīqūn*) to instill fear by means of them into the martyrs. God knows best what lies behind this.

Thus from the people of every halting-station a warning has emerged for those who are below them and an exhortation for those above them, as well as a cause of fear and intimidation for those in the same stations. This is the result of (149) one of His characteristics, namely indifference to whatever comes to light of [their] religious learning and works. Therefore none of the people of halting-stations finds repose in a halting-station and none of the people of states pays attention to a state, nor does someone who knows Him feel safe from God's cunning in any states—He is mighty and glorious!<sup>86</sup>

Abū Hāmid [al-Ghazzālī] says—God be pleased with him: 'Affairs are dependent on the divine will (*al-mashī'a*) in a way that goes beyond the limit of intelligible and usual matters. They can't be judged on the basis of analogy, conjecture and calculation, let alone with confirmation and certainty. It's this that lacerates the hearts of the knowers of God, for the great calamity is that your affair depends on the will of someone who has no concern for you.'<sup>87</sup>

Then after a long passage he says: 'A certain knower of God said: "If a column came to stand between myself and someone I'd known for fifty years had professed God's oneness—and then he died—I wouldn't declare with certainty that he [still] professed God's oneness. For I don't know what transformation he may have undergone." Another one said: "If martyrdom was at the door of the house and death as a Muslim was at the door of the room, I'd choose death as a Muslim because I don't know what will happen to my heart between the door of the room and the door of the house."

And Sahl<sup>88</sup> used to say: "The strictly truthful (*ṣiddīqūn*) fear a bad final outcome on the occasion of every thought and every motion. They're the ones God the Sublime described when He said: 'Their hearts are filled with fear' (22/60)."<sup>89</sup>

Abū Hāmid says: 'Sahl used to say: "The novice fears sins, whereas the knower of God fears being afflicted with unbelief

<sup>86</sup> *Nahrung* II, pp. 168 f., 32.259.

<sup>87</sup> *Ihyā'* IV, p. 171, ll. 15-17/*Stufen*, p. 359, C.115-116.

<sup>88</sup> I.e. Sahl al-Tustarī.

<sup>89</sup> *Ihyā'* IV, p. 171, l. -1 to p. 172, l. 5/*Stufen*, p. 360, C.118

(*kufr*).” And Abū Yazīd used to say: “When I set out for the mosque, there’s a belt [of infidelity] around my waist that I fear will lead me to a church or a fire-temple—until I enter the mosque and the belt is removed from me. This is what happens to me five times a day.”<sup>90</sup>

.....

An amazing story<sup>91</sup> connected with this idea took place which I heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘In Mecca<sup>92</sup>—God confer honor on the city—I met Abū’l-Ḥasan ‘Alī al-Ṣadghā’ al-Hindī<sup>93</sup> and I found him in a wondrous state. If he wished to take a step, he’d raise his foot and his foot would tremble in the air. He’d lower it again and it would tremble. Then he’d bring it back again in the direction of the step and it would tremble. He didn’t conclude the footstep until whoever saw him said: “He’s utterly crazy.” It was like this for every footstep. Similarly, when he raised some food to his mouth, he’d suffer the same thing. He’d extend his hand in the direction of his mouth and his hand would tremble. (150) Then he’d return his hand in the direction of his mouth and it would tremble. He wouldn’t place a morsel in his mouth until everyone who saw him felt pity for him. Likewise, the same would happen if he wished to lie down. The situation reached the point that this happened to him during every voluntary motion ascribed to him. It even happened to him when he shut his eyelid and when he opened it.

Now when I beheld him like this, I was very worried and saddened. I felt pity for him and said to him: “Oh Abū’l-Ḥasan, what’s this situation you’re in? After all, God has placed you among His Friends and the elite of His pure ones and among the great knowers of God and the members of the *Diwān*. Moreover, your body is sound and healthy without any illness.”

He replied: “I haven’t told anyone what’s happened but I’ll tell you. God the Sublime—praise be unto Him—caused me to behold His action among His creatures. I see His action pervading creation, with direct sight and without any of it being hidden from me. Then God—He is blessed and exalted—informed me of the secrets behind His action and His decree and His predestination throughout His creation—praise be unto Him solely due to His bounty! I behold these actions and I understand why they take place. And He

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<sup>90</sup> *Ihyā’* IV, p. 172, ll. 14-15/*Stufen*, p. 361, C.120.

<sup>91</sup> What follows is cited in *Rimāḥ* I, beginning on p. 218, l. -5.

<sup>92</sup> Is this encounter meant to have taken place supernaturally? There’s no indication in the *Ibrīz* that al-Dabbāgh ever made the pilgrimage to Mecca.

<sup>93</sup> Unidentified.

informed me of the secrets of His predestination behind them so that none of these secrets is hidden from me. I then looked at His action regarding myself but I found He veiled me from beholding it and beholding its secrets. I came to believe He only veiled me from beholding this due to the evil He intended for me, because His wrath—He is sublime—is connected with one of my actions. Thus He veiled me from all of them so I wouldn't know what contains my perdition and avoid it.

Consequently, I'm afraid of every voluntary action ascribed to me. I consider it possible that any one of my voluntary actions may be the cause of my destruction. The first motion in extending my foot is an action and I tremble and experience fear because of it. I then retract my foot and experience fear because of setting it down again. And so it is with every action.”

The Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘I then persisted in making him recollect God—He is mighty and glorious—and I mentioned to him God's abundance of mercy and His words in the divine *ḥadīth*: “I'm as My bondsman thinks of Me. Let him think of Me what he wishes. If he thinks good of Me, I'll bestow good on him.”<sup>94</sup> He went on listening to my words so that I thought he'd recover from the state he was in. But then his previous attitude came over him again and he remained in his state. Everyone who saw him felt pity for him and prayed that he'd soon find peace (151) one way or another.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘I wished the people who are veiled would see him and understand the secret of his state as well as the intensity of his fear of God—He is mighty and glorious—and his great attentiveness to God the Sublime in every action and inaction. Then they'd understand the extent to which they themselves are involved in lusts and estrangement from God—He is mighty and glorious!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘God the Sublime concealed from his sight His action in him because of a mercy He intended for him. If God had made him aware of this and he'd come to behold [God's] action in himself, his body would have dissolved. Since God the Sublime wanted his persistence and his continuation up to an appointed time of demise, He concealed from him His action in him. Now just as beholding the Lord's action—He is exalted—in the bondsman was established for him, it's been established for other Friends of God as well. Indeed, it was like this for all the prophets.

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<sup>94</sup> *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* II, p. 391.

On the other hand, the contingent (*al-ḥādith*), whatever way it may be, can't support beholding the Lord's action in itself but it will dissolve. What the contingent can support is beholding the Lord's action in someone else. But God knows best!

.....

Then he says:

'At no time have regard for people. This consigns

The free man of purity to the murkiness of captivity.'<sup>95</sup>

Having forbidden the novice to act with arrogance and contempt toward people, he also warns him not to be excessive in the other direction and make the people his *qibla*. In his actions the novice mustn't play the hypocrite before them and take account of them in his states and his words. Thus he says: 'At no time', i.e. not for one instant or a moment in time, 'have regard for people' and don't take account of them in any of your states and your actions, your words and your affairs, when it comes to worship and habitual practices. Considering them this way and being fettered by them 'consigns' the free man devoid of illness and evil 'to the murkiness of captivity' of illness and disease. If you do take account of people in your actions and your words, hypocrisy will enter into you. You'll also adopt dissimulation and preen yourself before them, approving of the occasions when they look at you.

That's why the shaykh Abū 'Abd Allāh al-Qurashī<sup>96</sup> said—God be pleased with him: (152) 'Whoever isn't content with God hearing and seeing his words and his actions, hypocrisy will surely enter into him.' And Bishr the Barefoot<sup>97</sup> said—God be pleased with him: 'I've never known a man who was pleased with being known that didn't end up in disgrace.' He also said: 'No man who's pleased with being known by the people will experience the sweetness of the hereafter.' And another person said: 'Don't hope for rank with God while you want rank with the people.' Al-Suhrawardī says in the *'Awārif*:<sup>98</sup> 'This is a principle which, if it's neglected, causes many works to be corrupted and, if it's adhered to, causes many states to be upright.' These are the words that form the basis for this verse.

One day I was with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—at the Bāb al-Ḥadīd. He looked at me and said: 'Let no one hope for knowledge of God without knowing the Apostle—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And let no one hope for knowledge of the

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<sup>95</sup> (34)=(*Rā'iyya* 43, p. 60)

<sup>96</sup> On him cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* II, pp. 283 ff., no. 443; died 599/1202.

<sup>97</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* I, pp. 557 f.; and EI s.n.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. editor's ftn., II, p. 152.

Apostle—God's blessings and peace be upon him—without knowing his shaykh. And let no one hope for knowledge of his shaykh without having recited the prayers for the dead over the people. For if (153) people vanish from his sight and he becomes indifferent to them in all his words, his actions and his affairs, he'll be shown mercy beyond expectation.' The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—admired anyone who was indifferent to people looking at him, and he told us precious secrets regarding this subject. God give us success in what He likes and approves—through His grace and His bounty—amen! But God knows best!

Then he says:

'And if the True draws up miracles in lines,  
Don't reveal a letter from a line to anyone  
Except the shaykh. Don't conceal a secret from him.  
In the arena of unveiling the secret he moves upon an

ocean.'<sup>99</sup>

It was stated earlier that if the novice recites the prayers for the dead over the people and they vanish from his sight, mercy will come to him beyond expectation. For this reason he says: 'And if the True draws up miracles', that is if God the Sublime has mercy on you so your sight is confined to Him and many miracles appear for you, proper behavior requires that you conceal them and don't mention them except to the shaykh. Don't conceal any of them from the shaykh. He's your doctor who knows your illnesses that block the path for you. Whoever possesses this quality deserves to have secrets revealed to him and veils removed for him. His words: 'In the arena of unveiling the secret he moves upon an ocean' mean that the shaykh, because of his knowledge of your illnesses, is like someone who moves upon an ocean in the arena of unveiling the secret. Here the arena is the place. This means that the shaykh moves upon an ocean in the place of unveiling the secret.

Al-Suhrawardī says in the *ʿAwārif*: 'Proper behavior requires that he not hide from the shaykh anything about his state and the gifts he possesses from God's bounty and whatever miracles and answers to his prayers appear for him, but that he reveal his state to the shaykh and whatever God the Sublime knows of him. Whatever causes him shame to reveal, he imparts by hints and allusions. For when the novice's conscience contains something but doesn't reveal it to the shaykh openly or through allusions, a knot affects his interior on the

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<sup>99</sup> (35)=(*Rāʾiyya* 44, p. 62) and (36)=(*Rāʾiyya* 45, p. 62).

path, and by talking with the shaykh the knot is undone and disappears.’<sup>100</sup>

As for the rules of good behavior on the shaykh’s part, al-Suhrawardī says: ‘Among the important rules of good behavior is guarding the novices’ secrets as far as what’s unveiled for them and the kind of gifts conferred on them. A novice’s secret mustn’t go beyond (154) his Lord and his shaykh. Next the shaykh instills contempt in the novice’s carnal soul for what he experiences during spiritual retreat (*khalwa*), be it unveiling or hearing speech or anything in the way of supernatural events. The shaykh teaches him that being occupied with any of this is a distraction from God the Sublime.’<sup>101</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that one day I was speaking with the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime’s words: “Am I not your Lord?” They replied: “Yes!” (7/172).’ He told me some precious things about this and I formulated an interpretation of it. The interpretation came to me during the ritual prayers and I was delighted with it. I told this to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! At first he agreed with me but a few days later he said to me: ‘Drop it.’ I didn’t understand the secret behind this. He went on holding me back from it—God be pleased with him—until it became clear to me later that had I persisted in it, it would have entailed some shameful things for me. I gave praise to God the Sublime and I realized this was due to the Shaykh’s blessing (*baraka*)—God be pleased with him!

One day I complained to him—God be pleased with him—about something that happened to me. He said to me: ‘After this it won’t befall you and it will never happen to you again.’ And so the matter turned out. It was as if a wall had been erected between myself and it.

And one day I complained to him—God be pleased with him—about a matter that happened to me entailing damage to religion and worldly affairs, something whose calamity one can’t be made safe from. He said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘As far as worldly affairs are concerned, don’t ever be afraid of it. No evil from it at all will befall you. And as far as the hereafter, I’ll be your guarantor for you with God the Sublime so you won’t be interrogated about this matter and called to account because of it. And the matter turned out as he said with regard to worldly affairs—God be pleased with him!

<sup>100</sup> ‘Awārif, p. 411, ll. 5-9/*Gaben*, p. 356, 51.21.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Awārif, p. 420, ll. -9 to -6/*Gaben*, p. 363, 52.13.



We beseech God—He is exalted—that it may turn out as he said in the hereafter—God be pleased with him!

And he used to say to us—God be pleased with him: ‘Don’t hide from me anything that befalls you in religion and worldly affairs. Inform me even of the sins you commit. If you don’t inform me, I’ll inform you, for there’s no good in an association (*ṣuḥba*) in which any circumstances of the associates are covered up.’

And he used to say—God be pleased with him: ‘As for myself, I conceal nothing of my affairs from you.’ Then he explained his situation to us—God be pleased with him—right up to the present time and told us everything usual and unusual that happened to him. He said to us—God be pleased with him: ‘If I didn’t inform you about my circumstances and reveal them to you, God would punish me and hold me to account because you think well of me. But be patient until I tell you about the (155) internal matters you’re unaware of. After that whoever wishes to remain with me, let him remain. Then it will be permitted for me to eat his food and to accept his gifts. And whoever wishes to depart, let him depart. If I were silent about these matters, I’d be deceiving you.’ But he was nothing less than a pure mercy for his disciples! He interceded for them regarding their mistakes. He was their guarantor in their misfortunes, and everything whose final outcome they were afraid of he bore on their behalf. He was actually more concerned with their affairs than he was with his own.

One day he said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘A man who doesn’t share in his companion’s bad acts is no companion to him.’ And he said: ‘If association is only based on good acts, that isn’t association.’ In short, he was—God be pleased with him—nothing but a mercy sent from God—He is mighty and glorious—and the people who shed tears shed tears for the likes of him. Regarding this subject, if we wished to present a detailed explanation of the chief points that we as well as others experienced with him, our words would become lengthy. Thus what al-Suhrawardī says in the *‘Awārif* became clear: ‘And by talking with the shaykh the knot is undone.’ But God knows best!

Then the author of the *Rāʾiyya* says:

‘And if something is unveiled for you, consult him.

He smiles broadly in clarifying the secret of unveiling.’<sup>102</sup>

That is to say: ‘Oh novice, consult your shaykh about unveiling if you’ve been shown something.’ ‘He’, i.e. the shaykh, ‘smiles

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<sup>102</sup> (37)=(*Rāʾiyya* 46, p. 65)

broadly' in clarifying unveiling. This means he's happy and pleased by your asking him about unveiling and will explain its secret to you.

Al-Suhrawardī says—God be pleased with him: 'Higher realities (*ḥaqā'iq*) may lay themselves bare for someone performing recollection of God (*dhikr*), without the garb of a similitude. This then is an unveiling and a communication to you from God the Sublime. Sometimes this happens by means of sight and other times by means of hearing. He may hear from within his interior and this may arrive from out of the air like supernatural voices—not from within him. In this way he realizes something that God wishes for him or for someone else. This then is a communication for him from God the Sublime so that his certainty increases. Or he sees the reality of the matter in a dream.<sup>103</sup> Above all of this is the person for whom pure certainty is unveiled, by contrast with the unveiling that precedes it. Indeed, the latter may occur to Hindu sages,<sup>104</sup> philosophers, materialists (*dahriyyūn*), monks, and others as well who travel the path (156) of God-forsakenness and ruin. In their case this is [divine] deceit and enticement to destruction (*istidrāj*)<sup>105</sup> so that they regard their situation as good and settle down in their halting-station of dismissal and remoteness, while being kept in the blindness and error and the destruction and evil that God intends for them. The traveller on the path shouldn't be deluded by any of this but realize that even if he walked in the air and on water, it wouldn't profit him until he fulfilled the rightful claim of fear of God and renunciation of the world.'<sup>106</sup>—End of the gist of the citation in shortened and pieced together form.

For this reason one has need of the shaykh with regard to unveiling since there's no way to be safe from its calamity.

Then he says:

'Don't be isolated from him in a vision that occurs.

Night-blindness is in your eyes, deafness in your ears.'<sup>107</sup>

'Night-blindness (*‘ashā*)' is weakness in sight and 'deafness (*waqr*)' is hardness of hearing or complete lack of hearing.

As for 'a vision (*wāqi‘a*)', from the author of the *‘Awārif*'s words one understands that it's the appearance of higher realities in the form of a similitude, just as unveiling is the appearance of higher

<sup>103</sup> *‘Awārif*, p. 217, ll. -6 to -2/*Gaben*, p. 202, 27.14.

<sup>104</sup> Literally, Brahmins.

<sup>105</sup> Radtke, HT, p. 165.

<sup>106</sup> From: 'Indeed, the latter may occur to Hindu sages...'=*‘Awārif*, p. 219, l. -4 to p. 220, l. 1/*Gaben*, pp. 203 f., 27.20; and see Meier, *Kubrā*, p. 195.

<sup>107</sup> (38)=(*Rā'iyya* 47, p. 65)

realities without the form of a similitude. An example of this is victory over an enemy. The person asleep may see in his dream that he vanquishes his enemy. If after this he does vanquish him, his dream is in no need of interpretation. And the person asleep may see in his dream victory over his enemy in the form of a similitude—for instance, if he sees that he kills a snake and then wakes up and vanquishes his enemy. In that case the reality of victory appeared in the form of a similitude and his dream is in need of interpretation. In the first category this reality appeared to him without a form. What a person is shown in a waking state—if it isn't in the form of a similitude—is an unveiling, whereas if it's in the form of a similitude, then it's a vision. Here more than in the previous unveiling there's need of the shaykh because this form may possess a reality and it may be a vision. But it may be a similitude empty and devoid of benefit, without any meaning and content behind it, like confused dreams that occur in sleep. Then it isn't a vision because the condition for the soundness of a vision is firstly sincerity in recollecting God (*dhikr*) and secondly immersion in recollecting God. The sign for this is renunciation of the world and persistence in fear of God.

Thus the meaning of the verse is: 'Don't be isolated from the shaykh in a vision that comes over you, for you're weak in hearing and sight, whereas the shaykh's judgement is critical and penetrating.'

The author of the *ʿAwārif* says: 'It belongs to the rules governing the novice's proper behavior with the shaykh that the novice doesn't keep a vision and an unveiling to himself without consulting (157) the shaykh. For the shaykh's science is extensive and his door which is opened toward God the Sublime is greater. Thus if the vision is authentic, the shaykh confirms it and if there's doubt in it, the shaykh rejects it.'<sup>108</sup> The author then discusses this at length.

He also says: 'Among the subtle points which I heard from the disciples of our shaykh (Abū'l-Najīb al-Suhrawardī)—God be pleased with him—is that one day he said to his disciples: "We're in need of some wherewithal."<sup>109</sup> So return to your cells of retreat and bring me whatever God bestows on you." They did this. Then a person among them known as Ismāʿīl al-Batāʾihī came to him and he had a piece of paper with thirty circles on it. He said: 'This is what was bestowed (*futiha*) on me in my vision.' The shaykh took the paper and when only a moment had elapsed, behold a person came in

<sup>108</sup> *ʿAwārif*, p. 412, ll. 7-10 (adapted)/*Gaben*, p. 357, 51.24.

<sup>109</sup> Read *maʿlūm* in the Arabic text.

and he had gold with him. He presented the gold before the shaykh. The shaykh opened the [folded up] paper and behold, it contained thirty pieces of gold. He then placed each gold piece on a circle and said: "This is shaykh Ismā'īl's donation (*futūh*)."<sup>110</sup> Or other words to this effect.<sup>110</sup>

And he also says: 'Higher realities may be revealed in the garb of fantasy or in the form of a similitude,<sup>111</sup> the way higher realities are revealed in the garb of fantasy to a person who's asleep. For instance, someone may see himself kill a snake in a dream and then the interpreter says: "You're going to vanquish an enemy."<sup>112</sup>

Al-Suhrawardī then discusses this at length and explains the difference between a vision and an unveiling, and between a true vision and what's pure fantasy. For this subject he makes use of almost a whole page of large format. I've extracted the gist of it in commenting on this verse and the one preceding it. But God knows best!

Then he says:

'Flee to him in all important matters.

For you'll gain victory by means of this flight.'<sup>112</sup>

Its meaning is clear. Al-Suhrawardī says in the *ʿAwārif*: 'Let the novice be convinced that the shaykh is a door God has opened unto His lofty bounty. The novice enters and exits through it and returns to it and reveals (158) to the shaykh his random thoughts, as well as his important religious and worldly concerns. And he believes that the shaykh places before God the Munificent whatever the novice places before him, and in this respect resorts to God on the novice's behalf, the way the novice resorts to him. The shaykh possesses a door of speech and conversation that's open during sleep and in a waking state. Nor does the shaykh exercise authority over the novice by following his own whim. The novice has been entrusted to him by God and the shaykh asks God for help with the novice's needs, the way he asks help for himself and the important concerns of his religious and worldly affairs. God the Sublime has said: "It belongs not to a human being that God should speak to him, except by revelation, or from behind a veil, or that He should send an apostle" (42/51). Being sent as an apostle is reserved for prophets, as is revelation. On the other hand, speech from behind a veil through

<sup>110</sup> *ʿAwārif*, p. 157, ll. 15 to -4/*Gaben*, p. 152, 20.12.

<sup>111</sup> See p. 717.

<sup>112</sup> (39)=(*Rāʾiyya* 48, p. 68)

inspiration, supernatural voices, dreams and so forth, belongs to shaykhs.<sup>113</sup>

Al-Suhrawardī also says: 'And the rules of proper behavior toward the shaykh include that if the novice has something to discuss with the shaykh about a matter of his religion and worldly affairs, he isn't hasty to undertake speaking with him and intruding upon him but he waits until it's clear from the shaykh's state that he's ready for him and for hearing his words. Just as there are fixed times and proper rules of behavior and conditions for a prayer of supplication because it entails addressing God the Sublime, so there are proper rules of behavior and conditions concerning speaking with a shaykh. After all, this belongs to having dealings with God the Sublime. Thus before speaking to the shaykh the novice asks God the Sublime for success with what the rules of good behavior require.'<sup>114</sup>

And I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'For the novice the shaykh has the rank of: "There is no god but God and Muḥammad is the Apostle of God"—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Furthermore, the novice's faith is attached to the shaykh and it's the same for all his religious and worldly affairs. Those endowed with deeper vision behold this with their own eyes.' And I frequently used to go outside with him—God be pleased with him—but I didn't know his rank. He'd say to me: 'Your case is like that of someone who continues to walk on the height of the city walls and battlements despite the narrowness of the spot where you set your foot and the place far below that you could fall into.' I didn't understand the meaning of these words until a later time. Afterwards if these words occurred in my mind, they caused me great alarm and intense fear.

(159) One day I said to him: 'I'm in fear of God the Sublime because of things I've done.' He asked me: 'What things?' I told him what they were.

He replied to me—God be pleased with him: 'Don't be afraid because of these things. However, the greatest of serious sins on your part is that you should pass a moment without my being in your mind. This is the sin which will cause you harm in your religion and your worldly affairs.'<sup>115</sup>

And one time I said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, I'm really far removed from the good!'

<sup>113</sup> 'Awārīf, p. 98, ll. 9-17/*Gaben*, pp. 102 f., 12.10.

<sup>114</sup> 'Awārīf, p. 412, ll. 7 to -2/*Gaben*, p. 357, 51.25.

<sup>115</sup> From: 'For the novice the shaykh has the rank of...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 214, l. -2 to p. 215, l. 5.

He replied to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Drive away this thought! Look at your rank with me. You’ll be carried by your rank with me.’ And we were in a relationship with him—God be pleased with him—which has rarely been heard of. Nothing befell us, whether important or trivial, which we didn’t mention to him. Then he visibly took it over from us and released our mind from it once it had simply been mentioned to him.

And he would carry on joking and jesting with us—God be pleased with him! He removed our sense of shame and would speak to us first about matters before we questioned him about them. He’d say to us: ‘Don’t accord me the status of a shaykh. I’m actually like a brother to you. You won’t be able to follow the rules of proper behavior regarding the shaykh’s status. I’ll show you kindness and release you from this. Take me to be a brother, and association (*ṣuhba*) will still persist between me and you.’ May God reward him on our behalf with the most excellent reward—through His grace and His bounty!

If I wished to explain this brief section I’ve indicated about the Shaykh’s state—God be pleased with him—the account would become lengthy. But God knows best!

Then he says:

‘And don’t be someone who considers his action good

So it’s corrupted and it flees only to turn and attack.’<sup>116</sup>

This verse contains a warning against conceit which damages work. That is to say, don’t be one of those whose works appear good to them and fill them with admiration. This is how works are corrupted because conceit corrupts works. The words *illā an yafirra* (‘so that it flees’) appear in some manuscripts with a *yā* indicated below, whereas in others (160) *tā*’ is written above, i.e. *tafirra* (‘so that you flee’). The meaning is obvious in both cases. That is to say, if you flee from this conceit and self-approval and return to God the Sublime, your action won’t be corrupted. For if you return to God the Sublime, you’ll find it’s He Who has the power of free disposal over you and imposes this upon you, and that you’re a vessel among vessels, there being no difference between you and anyone else. You see yourself, as far as the self-approval that’s emerged from you, like somebody who’s proud of an action done by someone else. You then replace conceit by shame before God the Sublime, fear in face of His loathing, and gratitude to Him for His abundant bounty.

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<sup>116</sup> (40)=(*Rā’iyya* 49, p. 69)

Moreover, conceit is a sign that work hasn't been accepted, so that one of the knowers of God said: 'A sign that work has been accepted is that you forget it and cease completely to look at it, as is proven by God the Sublime's words: "And He raises aloft the righteous deed" (35/10).' He added: 'And the sign that God the True—He is exalted—has raised up this work is that nothing of it remains with you. If anything of it still remains in your sight, it hasn't risen aloft.' Zayn al-ʿĀbidīn ʿAlī b. Ḥusayn said—God be pleased with him: 'As for each one of your actions, if your sight is attached to it, this is proof that it hasn't been accepted from you. For what's accepted has been raised aloft and is concealed from you, and as for what your sight no longer sees, this is proof it's been accepted.'

Then he says:

'Whoever alights at a station through sincere repentance  
Sees the defect in his actions and is set free.'<sup>117</sup>

That is to say: 'Whoever alights' and arrives at a station through sincere repentance before God—his return to Him being a complete return—'sees the defect in his actions' by means of which he draws near to his Master 'and he's set free (*mustabri*)', i.e. he's free (*barī*)—the letters *sīn* and *tā* being redundant. Indeed, he's free from that defect which he sees because of his undertaking works in accordance with what divine law and higher reality demand in his outer behavior and in his interior. But he's suspicious of his carnal soul and doesn't feel safe from some of its machinations that may be concealed from him. Abū Yaʿqūb Ishāq b. Muḥammad al-Nahrajūrī<sup>118</sup> said—God be pleased with him: 'The sign (161) of someone whom God has taken charge of with regard to his states is that he testifies to the shortcomings in his fidelity, the negligence in his recollections of God, the defect in his sincerity, the slackness in his vision, and the lack of observance in his poverty. Furthermore, all his states are unsatisfactory to him and he's ever more needful of God—He is mighty and glorious—in his aspiration and his conduct.'

And Abū ʿAmr Ismāʿīl b. Nujayb<sup>119</sup> said—God be pleased with him: 'No one's footstep with regard to being God's bondsman is pure until he considers all his actions hypocrisy and all his states mere pretensions.' Moreover, the carnal soul would be disposed toward the opposite of good, if it weren't for God's bounty to us and His mercy. God the Sublime has said: 'Were it not for God's bounty

<sup>117</sup> (41)=(*Rāʿiyya* 50, p. 70)

<sup>118</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* II, p. 57, no. 324; died 330/941; and Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 93, no. 60.

<sup>119</sup> Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, p. 99, no. 74.

to you and His mercy, not one of you would ever be pure' (24/21). And glorious is he (Joseph: the 'azīz of Egypt) who said: 'Yet I claim not that my carnal soul was innocent. Surely the carnal soul incites to evil unless my Lord shows mercy' (12/53).

And one of the masters said—God be pleased with him: 'There is only His bounty and we only live under His veil. For if the covering were removed, a distressing matter would be revealed.' And this is why the great dissociate themselves from their good actions, not to speak of their other actions. Abū Yazīd even said: 'If my declaring: "There is no god but God!" were pure just once, I wouldn't care about anything after that.' And Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī<sup>120</sup> said: 'I wouldn't deem any work of mine good if I reckoned it to my credit.'

.....

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this is what pertains to the commentary on the verses that the author of the *Rāʾiyya* imparts concerning the shaykh of training, as well as the rules of proper behavior he follows and the rules governing the novice's proper behavior toward him. These are some of the most precious things that have come to be heard. The novice must learn this *qaṣīda* by heart, for it's an illuminated *qaṣīda*. If it isn't possible for him to memorize it all, let him learn the verses that deal with the shaykh of training.

The author of the *Rāʾiyya* is the imam Abū'l-ʿAbbās Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Khalaf al-Qurashī al-Taymī al-Bakrī (162) al-Ṣiddīqī<sup>121</sup> who originates from Salā. He was born in Salā in the year 581/1185 and grew up in Marrakesh. He settled in Fayyūm in Egypt—God protect that country—and in Fayyūm he passed away in Rabiʿ al-Awwal of the year 641/August 1243. There he bore the surname Tāj al-Dīn and the *kunya* Abū'l-ʿAbbās. He had memorized a great store of knowledge—God be pleased with him—pertaining to rhetoric, grammar and literature, and he was a fine poet, as well as being accomplished in speculative theology (*kalām*), excellent in the foundations of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) and outstanding in Sufism. He devoted himself to Sufism and relied upon it. He wrote books about Sufism and he composed this *qaṣīda* of his—on its goals and the stages of travelling its path—which he entitled: *Anwār al-sarāʾir wa-sarāʾir al-anwār* (*The Lights of the Innermost Secrets and the Innermost Secrets of the Lights*). The people learned it from him and it became well known in all quarters because of the accomplishment of its verse and its accurateness.

<sup>120</sup> Cf. Gramlich, 'Dārānī', pp. 22-24.

<sup>121</sup> Commonly known by his *nisba* al-Sharīshī, i.e. from Jerez in Spain.



The author of *Ithmid al-ʿaynayn*<sup>122</sup> says: 'This *qaṣīda* is an authoritative source (*ḥujja*) for the people of the mystic path, and shaykhs—God be pleased with them—are ever recommending it and advising their students to act in accordance with it.' Then he reports that the shaykh Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad al-Hazmī—God be pleased with him—frequently recommended it to his disciples and all his students, favoring it greatly, and that benefits accrue to whoever remains attached to it. He adds: 'He was always talking about it and commented on some of its important passages.'

Now the author [of the *qaṣīda*]<sup>123</sup>—God be pleased with him—studied with several teachers in Marrakesh. Then he travelled about in search of religious learning (*ṭalab al-ʿilm*). In Fez he studied with the Uṣūlī imam, the worshipper and ascetic, Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. ʿAlī b. ʿAbd al-Karīm, known as Ibn al-Kattānī al-ʿAbdallāwī,<sup>123</sup> and with the shaykh and imam, the outstanding scholar and grammarian, Abū Dharr Muṣʿab, the son of the imam and grammarian Abū ʿAbd Allāh Muḥammad b. Masʿūd b. Abī Rakk al-Khushanī al-Ishbīlī<sup>124</sup> and later [known as] al-Fāsī, being from the progeny of Abū Thaʿlaba al-Khushanī<sup>125</sup>—God be pleased with him—the famous Companion of the Prophet, and with the shaykh Abūʿl-ʿAbbās b. Abīʿl-Qāsim Ibn al-Qaffāl.<sup>126</sup> Next he went to al-Andalus and studied with some of the people there. After that he travelled east and went on the pilgrimage to Mecca. In Baghdad he studied with the imam and scholar Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Razzāq,<sup>127</sup> the son of Quṭb al-Ṣiddīqīn wa-Ḥujjat Allāh liʿl-ʿĀrifīn Muḥyī al-Milla waʿl-Dīn Abū Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Qādir b. Abī Ṣāliḥ al-Sharīf al-Ḥasanī, known as al-Jīlānī,<sup>128</sup> and with the *ḥadīth* expert and historian, the shaykh Abūʿl-Ḥasan Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. ʿImrān al-Qaṭīʿī,<sup>129</sup> and with the shaykh Abū Muḥammad Qamīṣ b. Fayrūz b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥanbalī.<sup>130</sup> Speculative theology he studied with the imam and great shaykh Taqī al-Dīn Abūʿl-ʿIzz Muẓaffar b. ʿAbd Allāh b. ʿAlī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Azdī al-Shāfiʿī,

<sup>122</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 146, CXI.

<sup>123</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>124</sup> *Wāfi* V, p. 22, no. 1984; died 544/1149.

<sup>125</sup> *Usd* VI, p. 44, no. 5744.

<sup>126</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>127</sup> Mentioned in *Siyar* XXI, p. 272.

<sup>128</sup> See here p. XV, ftn. 29.

<sup>129</sup> Should read b. ʿUmar instead of b. ʿImrān; *Wāfi* II, p. 10, no. 474; died 634/1236-37.

<sup>130</sup> Unidentified.

known as al-Muqtaraḥ.<sup>131</sup> In Alexandria he studied (163) the foundations of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*) with the shaykh and imam, the outstanding luminary, Shams al-Dīn Abū'l-Ḥasan °Alī b. Ismā'īl b. Ḥasan b. °Aṭīyya al-Abyārī al-Mālikī.<sup>132</sup> In Baghdad he studied Sufism through direct experience (*dhawq*) and illumination (*ishrāq*) with the shaykh of shaykhs of his age and the exemplary of his time, the Interpreter of the mystic path and the Sultan of the people of higher reality, Shihāb al-Dīn Abū Ḥafṣ—who also bore the kunya Abū °Abd Allāh—°Umar b. Muḥammad b. °Abd Allāh al-Qurashī al-Taymī al-Bakrī al-Ṣiddīqī al-Shāfi'ī, known as al-Suhrawardī, the author of the °Awārif which is the basis for this *qaṣīda*. But God knows best!

Moreover, he studied medicine with Abū Bayān.<sup>133</sup> And the godly shaykh Abū °Abd Allāh Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm al-Qaysī al-Salāwī<sup>134</sup> who resided in Tunis has transmitted from him. He met him in al-Fayyūm in Egypt. But God knows best!

#### (164) SECTION

Now that we've finished describing the shaykh who engages in training, his rules of proper behavior and the novice's rules of proper behavior toward him, let's turn to discussing the spiritual masters whom the Shaykh inherited from—God be pleased with them! And so we relate:

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'I inherited from ten Friends of God.' And they're the following:

1) Sayyidī °Umar b. Muḥammad al-Hawwārī who resided in the shrine of Sayyidī °Alī b. Ḥirzihim—God give us profit through him!

2) Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī who was one of the Pivots. In the beginning of this book the circumstances of his meeting the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—are described.

And I heard al-Dabbāgh say—God be pleased with him: 'Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī was given to drink the lights of approximately seventy of God's beautiful names.'

<sup>131</sup> Van Ess, *Īcī*, pp. 51 f.; and now al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt* VIII, p. 372, no. 1270.

<sup>132</sup> See 'Ibrīziana', p. 142, LXXXVIII.

<sup>133</sup> Apparently Ibn Abī'l-Bayān al-Isrā'īlī (556-638/1161-1240) is meant; cf. Ullmann, *Medizin*, p. 309.

<sup>134</sup> Unidentified.

3) Sayyidī Yaḥyā, the [spiritual] master of al-Jarīd,<sup>135</sup> who was also one of the Pivots, and outwardly and inwardly he was a fervent follower of the *sharīʿa* of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! He was endowed with the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) over all who pay visits of respect to the godly dead, and he saw to their requests and fulfilled those which God had foreordained. Al-Dabbāgh told me this—God be pleased with him—when I spoke to him about the case of one of the eminent dead frequently visited by the people, who has imparted benefits and whose shrine has cured the sick.

He said to me—God be pleased with him: 'The hearts of Muḥammad's religious community—God's blessings and peace be upon him—possess great significance with God. If they were to gather at a spot where no one is buried and imagine a Friend of God to be there and begin to make requests of God the Sublime in that place, God—He is exalted—would be quick to respond to them. And Sayyidī Yaḥyā is the one who today'—i.e. the day of the report—'has the power of free disposal (165) in this matter. And the same may happen with regard to living Friends of God as well. It may be that among the people a man becomes famous for Friendship and requests are granted by using him as an intermediary with God. However, he has no share in Friendship with God. The request of someone who uses him as an intermediary with God is actually granted by the people with the power of free disposal. It's they—God be pleased with them—who've established this man in the guise of a Friend of God so that people of darkness like himself gather round him. It's they who exercise free disposal in accordance with the divine decree. Meanwhile, in their hands the man is like an effigy that the owner of standing corn sets up in his field to drive away the birds. The birds imagine the effigy is a man and flee from it. In reality this is due to the action of the owner of the field, not to the action of the effigy. In the same way the people with the power of free disposal—God be pleased with them—establish this man, and the people of darkness like himself gather round him. The one with the power of free disposal remains concealed from them. He isn't visible to them, because he's real and they aren't able to support reality.'<sup>136</sup>

<sup>135</sup> Cf. Jean-Léon l'Africain, *Description* II, e.g. p. 439; al-Jarīd is in present-day Tunisia.

<sup>136</sup> From: 'And the same may happen with regard to living Friends...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 103, ll. 12 to -8.

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘A man came to a frightening road after sunset and there were two men lying in wait for him. One of them was where the mountain trail began and the other half way along it. The man had placed himself under a shaykh who was of no worth. When he was about to enter on the mountain trail, he exclaimed: “Oh Sayyidī So-and-so, over and above you I give precedence to the rank of our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! None the less, redeem me from this mountain trail and fulfill your promise to me.”’

Al-Dabbāgh continued—God be pleased with him: ‘One of the people with the power of free disposal heard him and he greatly revered the noble Prophet’s name—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—as well as his rank, which the man gave precedence over his shaykh. Of necessity he had to grant the request. He himself then went with the man. He kept him company in his heart and traversed the mountain trail with him, though the man didn’t see him. Meanwhile, God held back the two men who were thieves and they did nothing. The novice had no doubt that it was his shaykh who granted his request. When he came before him, he paid him four *mithqāls* [of silver] and a bit. But God knows best!’

4) Sayyidī Maṣṣūr b. Aḥmad who was from the people of Jabal Ḥabīb.<sup>137</sup> And he was also a Pivot with the power of free disposal—over affairs of the sea. The Shaykh said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Have you observed that when you slice meat, there are sometimes pieces that quiver?’ I replied: ‘Yes, I have.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This is what the body of Sayyidī Maṣṣūr was like—God be pleased with him—when God bestowed illumination on him. (166) All the substances of his body would quiver out of awe and reverence for God the Sublime and he would remain like that for some time.’ And I heard al-Dabbāgh say—God be pleased with him: ‘I beheld our lord Abraham, the Friend of the Compassionate—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him as well—ask Sayyidī Maṣṣūr for a favorable invocation—God be pleased with him!’<sup>138</sup>

How many a beneficial lesson to do with religious learning (*‘ilm*) and divine knowledge (*‘irfān*) the Shaykh related for us—God be pleased with him—from these two majestic Pivots, Sayyidī Yaḥyā and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr! But we were negligent. When I first became acquainted with him, [it seemed] we only heard from him: ‘I went forth with Sayyidī Yaḥyā and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr’, and ‘I did this with

<sup>137</sup> See p. 136, fn. 83.

<sup>138</sup> From: ‘And I heard al-Dabbāgh say...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 203, ll. 5-6.

Sayyidī Yaḥyā and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr', and 'Sayyidī Yaḥyā said this and that, and Sayyidī Maṣṣūr said such-and-such.' But we had no concern for what we heard until it became clear to us that we were being negligent. God then gave us success with this matter—praise and gratitude be unto Him—so that from then on I wrote down whatever I heard. What occurred before that was lost. Furthermore, I only became engaged in writing things down after these two venerable lords had died—God be pleased with them!

5) Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Lahwāj who was from the people of Anjarā<sup>139</sup> in al-Faḥṣ, <sup>140</sup> and he was also a Pivot. The circumstances of how the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—came to meet him were described earlier.<sup>141</sup> What the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—had to recount about him wasn't very much. I only know three stories he told about him. I've recorded the one that involved him and al-Dabbāgh at the spring by Dār Ibn ʿUmar, which was presented earlier.<sup>142</sup>

6) Sayyidī Aḥmad b. ʿAbd Allāh al-Miṣrī, and he was a Support. The stories by means of which he admonished the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—were presented earlier.<sup>143</sup>

(167) 7) Sayyidī ʿAlī b. ʿĪsā al-Maghribī, and he was also a Pivot. He resided in Jabal al-Durūz in the land of Syria. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—recounted for us a long story about the cause of his transference from the land of al-Maghrib to the land of Syria. I'd already known it for quite some time.

8) Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿAlī al-Kaymūnī.

9) Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Maghribī..

10) Sayyidī ʿAbd Allāh al-Jarrāz—with a *jīm*. He resided in the tribal village (*dayr*) of Dayr Marrākush.

At the end of the year 1129/1717 al-Dabbāgh added the inheritance of another man from among the great Friends of God, as I heard from him—God be pleased with him! The man's name was Sayyidī Ibrāhīm Lamlaz. He told me—God be pleased with him—the name of this Friend of God and said to me: 'Retain it!' After a while he asked me about it and he found I'd forgotten it. He told it to me once more and urged me to retain it. Then he asked me about it after another period of time and found I'd forgotten it again. He told it to me once more and scolded me. I then wrote down his name and

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<sup>139</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>140</sup> See p. 136, fn 84.

<sup>141</sup> See p. 136.

<sup>142</sup> See p. 376.

<sup>143</sup> See p. 137.

retained it. Praise be to God! And this man was from Algiers. After that I was afraid to ask him whom he subsequently inherited from.

.....  
 Then I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘Was there a difference in what you inherited from them?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘I inherited knowledge of God the Sublime from the [other] nine just as I inherited knowledge of God from the first.’ And he formulated a similitude involving a horseman on a horse. A man desired a description of the horseman. A certain person met him and began to describe the horse for him. He described the horse’s legs, its particular color, its gait, and the way its neck extended like this and like that. And he mentioned all the horse’s trappings for him and the details of how the horseman rode it. But he didn’t say anything about the horseman’s appearance. Moreover, you must suppose his description of the horse and its gait wasn’t just a report. It imparted direct sight and vision of the horse and its gait due to the blessed power of the informant. But then someone came along who did speak to him of the horseman and gave him a description of him. He told him about his external appearance and his distinctive features, and removed (168) the veil from the horseman so the man could [even] see him directly.

On a different occasion he formulated a different similitude. He said: ‘What I experienced with Sayyidī ‘Umar was like one man telling another: “Walk along this path and you’ll find water.” But he didn’t tell him where the water was on the path. So the man walked on without knowing where the water was until someone else arrived who specified the water’s place and explained it to him.’ Another time he said to me: ‘The similitude for what I experienced with Sayyidī ‘Umar is the following. One man caught game for another man. He then threw it down in front of him and went off, leaving the game behind. The other man had no idea what to do with it. But someone else came along with fire and wood. He made a fire for him and gave him a knife. He told him: “Take this knife and cut whatever you want from the meat. Then add some seasoning and eat it!”’

I asked al-Dabbāgh: ‘Did Sayyidī ‘Umar belong to the second category of those who’ve received illumination?’

He replied: ‘Yes, he did but his illumination was weak.’ I asked: ‘Does he attend the Dīwān?’ He replied: ‘Yes, he does. But not everyone who attends the Dīwān grasps what goes on in it—what comes in and goes out, and what increases and diminishes.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is like at gatherings for religious learning. Not everyone who attends them grasps what goes on in them.

And I asked: 'How did you come to meet Sayyidī °Umar?'

He replied: 'I'd taken as my shaykh many a person who didn't possess the secret. God the Sublime then drew my heart to Sayyidī °Umar, and it was Sayyidī °Alī b. Ḥirzihim who brought us together. Sayyidī °Umar was the custodian [of the shrine]. We were [both] recipients of °Alī b. Ḥirzihim's charity. I then looked at Sayyidī °Umar and his state filled me with admiration. I began asking him for the litany. He ignored me but my desire and longing increased until one night I remained overnight with him in the shrine of °Alī b. Ḥirzihim.' It was then that the previous story occurred about implanting the litany and how he came to meet our lord al-Khaḍir—peace be upon him!

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(169) And while I was present, al-Dabbāgh was asked—God be pleased with him—about the benefit of the litany that the shaykhs conferred on him.

He replied—God be pleased with him—to the questioner: 'Are you asking me about the authentic shaykhs or the false ones?' The questioner said: 'The authentic ones.' Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'The benefit from it is that God the Sublime preserves this community's religion through the pure *sharī'a* which, if it's acted upon outwardly, preserves the faith in one's interior. The authentic shaykh is inwardly filled with vision (*mushāhada*) of the True—He is sublime and exalted! If before having met the perfect shaykh, the novice says: "There is no god but God!", he says it with his tongue, while his heart is negligent. The shaykh says it in his interior because of his immense vision. Consequently, if he implants it in the novice, his own state pervades the novice. The novice then goes on advancing until he reaches the shaykh's halting-station—if God has foreordained this for him.'

Then he formulated a similitude based on the well-known story that involved a king who had a son he loved dearly. The son was afflicted with a grave malady. The king gathered all the doctors in order to cure his son and he threatened them with a stern threat if his son didn't recover. The doctors agreed that to be cured the son must give up eating meat. They told this to the son but he rejected what they said. He exclaimed: 'I wouldn't give up meat, though my spirit were to come forth this very instant.' The doctors were baffled and perplexed by him. Something beyond their capacity had befallen

them, for the boy refused to follow what would cure him. Time and again they urgently pressed him but this only increased his reluctance. A man from among them then went and performed a major ritual ablution, implored God the Sublime, and resolved not to eat meat as long as the sick boy didn't eat it. He then went to the sick boy and said to him: 'Don't eat meat.' And the boy obeyed his command and listened to what he said. Straightway he recovered. The other doctors were amazed by this, and he informed them of what he'd done.<sup>144</sup>

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'Likewise, if the people of divine knowledge (*'irfān*) among the Friends of God the Sublime look at the bodies of those who are veiled and they see a pure body capable of bearing their secret and able to sustain it, they go on ceaselessly training it by implanting the *dhikr*-formula and other means. This person who's able to sustain the secret will be the shaykh's goal and no one else. On the other hand, if someone else who's unable to sustain it comes to the shaykh and asks to have the *dhikr* implanted in him, the shaykh won't refuse him because he doesn't block anyone's way. That's why you find shaykhs who implant the *dhikr*-formula in everyone, whether the person is able to sustain it or not.

And there's another benefit, which appears in the hereafter, namely that on the Day of the Resurrection the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—will bear the banner of praise<sup>145</sup> in his hand and this is the light of faith.<sup>146</sup> All mankind (170) will be behind him, the people from his community and those from other communities, along with all the prophets. Every community will be under the banner of its prophet, and the banner of its prophet draws assistance from the Prophet's banner—God's blessings and peace be upon him! For their part, they'll stand with their communities alongside one of his shoulders. Meanwhile, his own pure community will stand alongside his other shoulder, among them the Friends of God with the same number as the prophets. The Friends will possess banners like those of the prophets as well as followers like those of the prophets. They'll draw assistance from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and their followers will draw assistance from them, just as in the case of the prophets—blessings

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<sup>144</sup> From: 'And while I was present, al-Dabbāgh was asked...about the benefit of the litany...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 177, ll. 8 to -3.

<sup>145</sup> Huitema, *Voorspraak*, p. 32.

<sup>146</sup> From: 'Al-Dabbāgh said...: "Likewise, if the people of divine knowledge...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 177, l. -3 to p. 178, l. 2.



and peace be upon them! Now if the novice wasn't able to sustain the secret, he'll benefit in the hereafter from his shaykh who implanted the *dhikr* in him.'

And he added—God be pleased with him: 'However, he doesn't benefit from him solely because the *dhikr* was implanted in him and simply because of his pronouncing it, but he even learns from him the nature of faith in God, His angels, His books and His apostles, and acquires from him some benefit regarding the interior.'<sup>147</sup>

From a person other than the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—I heard stories similar to the one about the doctors, for instance that a slave who was someone's property asked a man of goodness to intercede and talk to his owner about setting him free. But the good man didn't respond to his request until more than a year had gone by. Then he went with the slave to his master and spoke to him about releasing the slave. The master consented to this and set him free. The slave rejoiced in his freedom and was delighted. But he said to the intermediary: 'Why did you wait so long before interceding? If you'd spoken to him when I first aroused your interest, he'd have set me free and the reward for this period of time would be added to your scales. What induced you to put off the matter until this much time had passed?' The intermediary replied: 'I don't talk to someone about a matter unless I've done it myself. When you asked me to talk to your master, I didn't possess a slave I could set free. So I went on working during this period until I'd earned the price of a slave. Then I bought one and set him free. After that I spoke to your master and he accepted my request. If I'd spoken to your master before setting free [that slave], I don't think he'd have done what we wanted. But God knows best!'

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—about the mightiest name of God Almighty: 'It's the completion of one hundred. It isn't among the [other] ninety-nine, though many of its meanings are contained in the ninety-nine names. Moreover, it's uttered by the body (*al-dhāt*), not by the tongue. You hear it emerge from the body like the ringing of brass. This is burdensome for the body. The body can only sustain uttering it once or twice in a day.' I asked: 'And why's that?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Because it only occurs with complete vision (*mushāhada*) which is something burdensome for this body. If the body utters it, the entire (171) world is terrified, being gripped by fear, reverence and awe.'

<sup>147</sup> From: 'All mankind will be behind him...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 178, ll. 6 to -15.

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘Jesus, the son of Mary—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—possessed the power to utter it and he uttered it fourteen times a day. But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—about the beautiful names of God: ‘The prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—acquired the meanings of the names through visions. Whoever beheld a meaning devised a name for it. The meanings appeared to them to the extent of their vision in God—He is mighty and glorious—and the names came forth from them in accordance with this.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘All the names were devised by the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them! Our lord Idrīs (Enoch) was the first to devise: Omniscient, Omnipotent, Almighty and Beneficent. In this way every prophet devised some of the names but they devised them in their own language. The Qurʾān’s virtue is that it unites them all and likewise has presented them in the Arabic language, not in the languages of the previous prophets.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The first to devise the name Allāh (*ism al-jalāla*) was our father Adam—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him! When God—He is sublime and exalted—breathed the spirit into him, he sat up in alertness. Then he stood on one leg while supporting himself on his other knee. In this situation with his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—he experienced an immense vision. God then caused his tongue to utter a word that conveyed the secrets he beheld from the Lofty Essence (*al-dhāt al-ʿaliyya*) and he said: “Allāh.” It had emerged in God’s knowledge—He is sublime and exalted—that he would be called by these beautiful names and for this reason He caused them to occur on the tongue of His prophets and His elite.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘If the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—had devised names for the meanings he experienced in his vision that can’t be sustained, everyone who heard them would dissolve. Yet God—He is sublime and exalted—is kind to His bondsmen. But God knows best!’

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that you mustn’t think these words are contrary to true doctrine, which is that the beautiful names are eternal. Their being eternal refers to the eternity of their meanings and not to their contingent words. Indeed, every word is an accident and every accident is contingent, especially if it’s fluid like words and sounds. This is clear. But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘In the name Allāh (*ism al-jalāla*) there are three secrets. The first is that God the Sublime’s creatures aren’t subject to limit. They’re diverse and subdivided into humans, Jinn, (172) animals, and other categories which most people don’t know about. Despite this multiplicity, God the Sublime is alone in His sovereignty. There’s no other planner and no other minister with Him. He alone—He is sublime—exercises the power of free disposal over all creatures. Nothing among them escapes Him and none of them is outside His omnipotence. He overpowers everything and encompasses it. As God the Sublime has said: “And God is behind them, encompassing” (85/20).

The second secret is that He exercises the power of free disposal over them as He wishes. This person He makes rich, this one poor. This person He makes powerful, this one He humbles. This one He makes white, this one black. This person’s request He grants, this person He refuses. And He differentiates between the two of them with regard to times and places.

In short, every day He’s engaged in something, nor is He distracted from one matter because of another. It’s He Who has free choice; His creatures do not. He does what He wishes, not what you wish. He is sublime—there is no god but He!

The third secret is that God the Sublime is all-holy and transcendent. He can’t be described and likened to anything among created beings. And yet He has such power and coercive force that were it not for the veil with which He’s veiled creatures, they’d become scattered dust, be razed to the ground and pulverized if God the Sublime manifested Himself to them. Indeed, no trace of them would remain, so that a person would say: “No created being at all has ever existed in this world.” However, God the Sublime in His mercy and His great wisdom, having foreordained in pre-eternity that He’d convey the inhabitants of every abode to their abode, if He wishes to create a creature, whatever creature it may be, only creates it after having first created its veil.’ And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘Those with deeper vision (*baṣīra*) understand these secrets simply by pronouncing the name Allāh, without a need to contemplate (*mushāhada*) any created beings at all.’<sup>148</sup>

I asked: ‘And why is that?’ He then formulated a similitude for us—God be pleased with him—and through its meaning we

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<sup>148</sup> From: ‘In the name Allāh (*ism al-jalāla*) there are three secrets’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 116, ll. 5 to -7.

understood that this is so because it's a name that combines all the names. But God the Sublime knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'God the Sublime is all-holy, transcendent and not to be likened to anything among created beings. Whatever can be conceived in thought, God the Sublime is different from that.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This is because everything that can be conceived in thought exists among our Lord's creatures—He is sublime and exalted! For thought only conceives of something that's been created. And whatever is contained in thought has an equivalent, whereas God has no equivalent.'

(173) I said: 'But thought can conceive of a human being turned upside down who walks on his head.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'By God, I've beheld a person walking the way thought conceived of him. He covered his genitals with his hand which was like a veil for him. He only removed his hand if he wished to attend to his [basic] needs, whether defecating or sexual intercourse.'

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'One day I was seated with Sayyidī Muḥammad b. 'Abd al-Karīm al-Baṣrāwī and he said to me: "Come, let's imagine in our thoughts the strangest form and then look among God's creatures to see whether it exists or not." I replied: "Imagine whatever you wish." Then he said: "Let's imagine a creature that walks on four feet and has the form of a camel. Its entire back is mouths like the mouths the crab (*'ukrūsha*) has on its side. And on its back, with a color different from its own, is a minaret that rises upward. At the top of the minaret are balconies from one of which it urinates and defecates. From another balcony it drinks, and in between the balconies is the form of a human being with his head, his face and all his limbs."

He'd barely finished describing it when we beheld this creature and there was a great number of them. Suddenly a male among them lept on a female and she was made pregnant by him. During another year the female lept upon the male because the situation was reversed. The male had become a female and the female a male.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is one of the strangest things anyone has heard of. But God knows best!

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And I heard him speak about vision (*mushāhada*)—God be pleased with him—and he regarded it as very important. He indicated that most people were incapable of it and he mentioned the reasons for their incapacity. Finally, he told us a story about himself.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘I met one of the Friends of God the Sublime at the end of the year 1127/1715-16. I said to him: “Invoke God the Sublime on my behalf so that He bestows on me vision of Himself.” He replied to me: “Stop this! Don’t seek vision from God the Sublime until He bestows it on you without your asking. If He bestows it on you without your asking, He’ll give you assistance with it and bestow on you the strength for it before it descends upon you. If you start asking Him for it—He is sublime and exalted—and you ask Him frequently, (174) He won’t refuse your request. But be fearful lest He leaves you to yourself and you prove incapable of it.” Still I said: “Request it for me. I can sustain it.”

Then he said to me: “Consider the world of human beings.” I considered it. He said: “Gather it all together before your eyes so it becomes like the circle of the signet ring.” I replied: “I’ve gathered it together.” Then he said: “Consider the world of the Jinn and do the same with that.” I replied: “I’ve done it.” He said: “Consider the world of the angels—the angels of the earth, the heavens and the Celestial Throne—and do the same with them.” I replied: “I’ve done it.”

Al-Dabbāgh related: ‘He set about enumerating all the worlds, world by world, until he’d counted many kinds. He mentioned the world of Paradise and everything it contains, as well as the world of conflagration [Hell] and everything it contains. And he ordered me to gather [all] that before my eyes. I gathered it together and I replied: “I’ve done it.” Then he said: “Consider what’s gathered together before your eyes and consider it with one glance. Exert yourself to see whether you can visualize the whole in this one glance.” I exerted myself but I was unable to do it. He said to me: “You can’t sustain beholding these created beings and are unable to visualize them in your sight. So how is it with beholding the Creator—He is sublime and exalted—?” Now I understood the truth and I wept tears of the heart because of my desire for something I couldn’t sustain.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘No human being can sustain visualizing these creatures in one glance. No person has the capacity to do so.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Similarly, whoever among the Friends of God the Sublime sees the Prophet in a waking state—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—can’t see him until he sees all these worlds—though not in one glance.’<sup>149</sup>

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149 From: ‘Similarly, whoever...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 200, ll. 5 f.

One time when I'd first met al-Dabbāgh and I was talking with him about the spirit, he said to me—God be pleased with him: 'An intelligent person won't grasp the spirit and won't come to know its reality until all the worlds have been revealed to him before his becoming acquainted with it. If there are still some worlds that remain unrevealed and the spirit is then revealed, he'll be subjected to tribulations.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'If I sat with the most noble religious scholar and he questioned me regarding the spirit and I answered his questions, though he went on like this for four years, his objections about the matter wouldn't cease because of its many difficulties and its obscurity. But God knows best!'

(175) And I heard him formulate a similitude—God be pleased with him—about the bondsman not being able to sustain knowledge of his Lord the way His grandeur and His majesty really are—He is sublime and exalted! He said: 'If God the Sublime provided vessels of clay with understanding and someone were to ask them about their maker, the master craftsman who produced them—what he's like, about his height and his complexion, about his reason and understanding, how his hearing and his sight are, how long his life lasts in this world, what instruments he used to make them and other characteristics of the master who produced them, both external and internal ones, they wouldn't be capable of such knowledge and their body wouldn't be capable of bearing this information. A made thing is never able to know the attributes of its maker as he really is.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Now if this inability exists in one contingent being with regard to another contingent being, what do you expect when it comes to the eternal Maker—He is sublime and exalted! Therefore no creature, whatever creature it may be, will ever be able to know Him in reality, neither in this world nor in the world to come—not in all eternity! But God knows best!'

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Performing the recollection of God (*dhikr*) is more burdensome for the body than worship.' He said: 'What's meant by body (*dhāt*) is the wicked body that's given to drink the water of darkness. The recollection of God gives it light to drink but the body doesn't accept it because of the darkness in the body. For the light wants to transform its nature and make it abandon its reality, like someone who wants to put a man's nature in a woman and put a woman's nature in a man, or like someone who wants to put the savor of wheat and its pleasantness and taste in some other grain. But don't ask what contriving and confusion this entails!' He said: 'It's different with worship. It

occupies the exterior of the body and is like doing work with a hoe. It's burdensome, yet only in terms of the body's fatigue and exhaustion. But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'There's a name among God the Sublime's names which if the bondsman is given to drink its light, he will weep continually.' I asked: 'What name is that?' He replied: 'The Near (*al-qarīb*).' And I said: 'It's as if he weeps because his return (176) is to God after negligence, like someone who after his journey returns to the dearest of God's creatures in his eyes, to his mother for instance, and you observe that he weeps when he sees her.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'His weeping with his mother is from pure joy and delight. He experiences this with God—He is mighty and glorious—along with something else, namely the sense of shame that comes over him when he remembers violating the commands of his Lord during the period of his negligence.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Among God the Sublime's names there's a name which if the bondsman is given to drink of its light, he laughs continually. He's like someone who's approached by a group—let's imagine sixty persons for instance—and they remove his clothing. They begin to tickle him and touch him with their fingers in all the places that make him laugh. He's in their hands and unable to escape from them.'

I asked: 'And what's this name?' He replied: 'The Most High (*al-muta'ālī*).' I was then overcome by awe which hindered me from posing all the questions that were in my mind. For I'd intended to ask him about the lights of all the beautiful names.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'No time is more difficult for the Friend of God than the time when he's given the lights of the names to drink because of his body's disruption amid the demands of the names. Every name demands something that contradicts what another name demands.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'There are those who are given one name to drink and its effect on them persists, whether it be continual laughter or continual weeping, or whether it be something else. And there are others who are given two names to drink, and others still who are given more than that to drink.'

Then I asked: 'And how many have you been given to drink?' He replied—God be pleased with him—and he was truthful in what he said: 'I've been given ninety-seven names to drink. A full one hundred minus three.'

I said: 'But the names amount to ninety-nine.' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The name which completes one hundred isn't counted among them because it can't be sustained by the people. It's God Almighty's "Supreme Name". If He's invoked with it, He'll answer. If a request is made of Him with it, He'll grant the request.'

What he said about this name—God be pleased with him—was presented earlier.<sup>150</sup> It shows he's familiar with the name to the utmost degree. I've met authentic Friends of God—God be pleased with them and give us profit through them—and I've heard what they said regarding the Supreme Name but I haven't heard words like this about it—God be pleased with him! Nor have I recorded everything I heard on this subject.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Only one of the Friends of God is given to drink this number', (177) i.e. the number that he was given to drink.

I replied: 'He's the Support (*al-ghawth*).'

This is what he said in the beginning. At the end of his affair I heard him say—God be pleased with him—that he'd been given the complete number to drink, I mean the hundred, and that being given to drink is divided into two categories. The first is in the halting-station of the spirit, and there are Friends of God who are given to drink one and others who are given more to drink. But only the Support completes all one hundred. The second category is in the halting-station of the secret. He said—God be pleased with him: 'No created being except the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—completes the hundred in this halting-station.'

I, al-Lama'i, would add that contained in these words are secrets and lights which are known to the people endowed with them—God bestow upon us their approval! But God knows best!

And I heard him speak—God be pleased with him—about God the Sublime's names and those who use them in their litanies (*awrād*). He said—God be pleased with him: 'If they receive them from a shaykh who's a knower of God (*'ārīf*), the names will do them no harm. But if they receive them from someone who isn't a knower of God the names will harm them.'

I asked: 'What's the reason for this?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The beautiful names possess lights from among the lights of the True—He is sublime and exalted! Should you wish to use the name in recollecting God (*dhikr*), if its light accompanies the name and you use it, it won't

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<sup>150</sup> See p. 733.



harm you. But if the name isn't accompanied by its light which screens the bondsman from Satan, Satan will be present and cause harm to the bondsman. If the shaykh is a knower of God who's continually in God's presence and he wants to bestow one of God's beautiful names on his novice, he bestows on him this name with the light that screens him. Then the novice uses it in recollecting God and it does him no harm. Furthermore, its benefit depends on the intention with which the shaykh bestowed the name on him. If he bestowed it on him with the intention that he acquire the world, he'll acquire it. Or if the intention was that he acquire the hereafter, he'll acquire it. Or if the intention was that he acquire knowledge of God the Sublime, then that's what he'll acquire.

(178) On the other hand, if the shaykh who implants the name is veiled and simply bestows the name alone on his novice without the protective light, the novice will perish. We beseech God for protection from this!<sup>151</sup>

I said: 'But the noble Qur'ān contains the beautiful names and those who've memorized it recite it. Likewise, they continually recite the beautiful names it contains and the names don't harm them. What's the reason for this, despite their not having received them from a shaykh who's a knower of God?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'God has sent Muḥammad our lord, our Prophet and our master—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with the Qur'ān to everyone whom the Qur'ān will reach from his own time up to the Day of Resurrection. Whoever recites the Qur'ān has the Prophet as his shaykh with regard to it—God's blessings and peace be upon him! This is the cause of protection for those who've memorized the Qur'ān—God give us benefit through them! Moreover, he only bestowed the Qur'ān on his noble community—God's blessings and peace be upon him—to the extent that they could sustain it and understand it on the basis of the external affairs they comprehend. He didn't bestow the Qur'ān on them with all its secrets and its lights and the lights of the names it contains. Had he bestowed it upon them with its lights, no one from his noble community would commit a sin, they'd all be Pivots, and no one would ever be harmed by the names.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'In the surah *Yā-Sīn* there are two names at the beginning: "the Almighty, the Compassionate (*al-ʿazīz al-rahīm*)". And there are two names in the middle: "the Almighty, the Omniscient (*al-ʿazīz al-ʿalīm*)". In the surah *Ṣād* there

<sup>151</sup> From: 'And I heard him speak...about God the Sublime's names...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 175, ll. -9 to -3.

are two names: “the Almighty, the All-giving (*al-‘azīz al-wahhāb*)”. And these names are useful for good in the world and good in the hereafter.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘In the surah *The Kingdom* God the Sublime has said: “Will He not know whom He has created? And He is the All-subtle, the All-aware” (67/14). This is beneficial for whoever has been afflicted with poverty, injury, ignorance, misfortune or sin. If he frequently recites the verse, God the Sublime—through His grace, His bounty and His nobility—releases him from what has afflicted him. But God knows best!’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that I observed one of our companions who was afflicted with pox, known to common folk as *ḥabb al-baysh*,<sup>152</sup> which is a malady that baffles [doctors]. He came to the Shaykh who was still alive—God be pleased with him—and complained to him about it and was extremely fearful of it. The Shaykh—God be pleased with him—ordered him to recite the noble Qurʾānic verse and God then removed the malady from him beyond expectation. But God knows best!

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(179) And I heard him say about the origin of the ecstatic dance (*ḥaḍra*)—God be pleased with him: ‘The ecstatic dance didn’t exist in the first generation, i.e. the generation of the Companions, nor in the second generation, i.e. the generation of the Followers, nor in the third generation, i.e. the generation subsequent to the Followers. Now these three generations are the best generations, as the noble *ḥadīth* corpus testifies.’

The reason for his saying these words was because someone asked him about the ecstatic dance. He said—God be pleased with him: ‘I was loath to reply to him with the clear truth. After all, I’m an unschooled layman and he’s not likely to accept it from me.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this question is posed by our religious scholars as follows: ‘Did the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—ever engage in the ecstatic dance or not? Now if they say: “He never did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did Abū Bakr—God be pleased with him—ever do it or not?” If they say: “He never did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did ‘Umar—God be pleased with him—ever do it or not?” If they say: “He never did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did ‘Uthmān—God be pleased with him—ever do it or not?” If they say: “He never did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did ‘Alī—God be pleased with him—ever do it or not?” If they say: “He never did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did any of the Companions—God be pleased with them one

<sup>152</sup> *ḥabb al-baysh*: some form of pox, probably smallpox.

and all—ever do it or not?” If they say: “It isn’t confirmed that any of them did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did any of the Followers ever do it or not?” If they say: “It isn’t confirmed that any of them did it”, we’ll ask them: “Did any of those who followed the Followers ever do it or not?” And if they say: “It isn’t confirmed that any of them did it”—we know that whatever these three generations didn’t do has no good in it!’

Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: ‘The ecstatic dance appeared in the fourth generation and the cause for it was that there were four or five Friends of God the Sublime endowed with illumination who had followers and disciples. On certain occasions they had perhaps observed worshippers of God among the angels and others engaged in recollection (*dhikr*) of God the Sublime.’ He said: ‘There are some angels—blessings and peace be upon them—who recollect God with their tongue and their whole body. You see their body swaying to the right and to the left, and swaying forward and backward. When one of these five Friends of God beheld an angel in this state, the angel’s state filled him with admiration. His body was influenced by the state he beheld on the part of the angel and his body adopted the movement of the angel. His body then swayed just like the angel’s body swayed and his body imitated the angel’s body. But he was unaware of what issued from him because of his absence in beholding the True—He is sublime! Nor is there any doubt about the weakness and lack of strength of someone whose state is like this. When his followers saw him (180) swaying with this motion, they followed him. He started to move because of the angel’s motion and they started to move because of his motion. They adorned themselves in his external attire.

The five shaykhs, people of the interior and sincerity, passed away—God be pleased with them—and the people of external attire then occupied themselves with the ecstatic dance. They increased its movement and added musical instruments and took much trouble over it. The generations, one after the other, then handed it on as a legacy. And so you have understood that its origin was a weakness on the part of the above-mentioned shaykhs which led them to have no control over their exteriors. But as for the people of the [first] three generations—God be pleased with them—the ecstatic dance didn’t exist in their eras and none of them heard of it. But God knows best!’

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And I heard al-Dabbāgh say concerning deeper vision (*baṣīra*)—God be pleased with him: ‘It contains three hundred and sixty-six

thousand parts. One of its parts is in the eye's vision and the remaining parts are in the body of the knower of God who's the perfect heir. He sees with his body the way one of us sees with his eye but his sight is by means of the total of all his parts.' He said: 'This is only the case with one man'—by this he meant the Support under whom are the seven Pivots.

Someone who was present—we were in the person's house (181) in the city of Tetuan and he wasn't aware of the halting-station of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—said: 'Sayyidī °Abd al-Wahhāb al-Sha°rānī<sup>153</sup> recounts that Sayyidī °Abd al-Qādir al-Jīlānī, Sayyidī Aḥmad b. Ḥusayn al-Rifā°ī<sup>154</sup> and Sayyidī Ibrāhīm al-Dasūqī—God be pleased with them one and all—met each other in the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*) and in that world a story took place involving them. Sayyidī Ibrāhīm then recounted it to some of his disciples who said: 'Oh Sayyidī, who'll testify to this on your behalf?' And he was in Egypt with his disciples, while the other two shaykhs were in Iraq. Sayyidī Ibrāhīm replied. 'They'll testify to this themselves!' He was referring to the two shaykhs in question. Then suddenly they were present and testified on his behalf. And the man [from Tetuan] concluded: 'Now they were three, and each one of them was perfect.'

The Shaykh replied—God be pleased with him: 'This story is something the weakest among the Friends of God can do. I once met a Friend of God who'd attained a lofty halting-station, namely he beheld the created beings who possess speech and who are mute, the wild beasts, insects, the heavens and the stars, the earths and what they contain, and the whole orb of the world took sustenance from him. He heard its voices and its speech in a single instant. He provided each being with what it needed and gave it what was proper for it, without one thing distracting him from another. Indeed, the highest and the lowest part of the world was like someone who's in one space for him. Then this Friend of God was shown mercy. He looked and saw (182) that his support was from someone else, namely from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And he saw that the support of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was from the True—He is sublime—and he saw that everything was from Him—He is exalted!'

He said: 'I heard this Friend of God say: "When I see that support comes from someone other than myself, I feel like a [lowly] frog. All mankind is stronger and more capable than me."'

<sup>153</sup> See p. 630, fn. 19.

<sup>154</sup> Cf. al-Munāwī, *Kaw.* II, p. 218, no. 410; died 578/1182.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this was the characteristic of our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—who was the Support of the age and under whom were the seven Pivots.

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And one time he said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘I see the seven heavens and earths and the Celestial Throne within my body and it’s the same for the Seventy Veils located above the Throne—there being seventy thousand years in each of the veils and seventy thousand years in between each veil—and all of this is filled with the noble angels. And it’s the same for the world of Raqqā located above the Seventy Veils. Now all of these created beings only experience something in their thought, not to speak of their bodily limbs, with permission from a man whom God the Sublime has shown mercy.’<sup>155</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the explanation of these words is understood by those in the know—God bestow their approval on us and make us one of their group and their party! Amen, amen, amen, oh Lord of the worlds!

As for his saying—God be pleased with him—the least of the Friends of God can do what’s in this story, he’s right in that regard—God be pleased with him! I myself have seen a person who was at the beginning of illumination and the early stages of unveiling do something similar, even though up until then belief in the Sufis was not firm in him—God be pleased with them one and all!

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—saying: ‘The Prophet’s inheritance—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—consists of one hundred and twenty-four thousand bodies. Why then doesn’t the Support inherit them all?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘No one is able to sustain what the Prophet can sustain—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And the meaning of inheritance with regard to the Support is that no one has drunk from the Prophet’s body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—like the body of the Support has—God be pleased with him! But God knows best!’

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<sup>155</sup> The phrase: ‘God has shown him mercy’ often specifically means that God has given him access to higher levels of illumination. Here al-Dabbāgh is referring to himself in his capacity as the Support of his age.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

[1] Pp. 747-52. Al-Dabbāgh explains the meaning of the following words of Ibn Mashīsh: 'Oh Lord God, bless him from whom the secrets have burst forth!'

Pp. 752-59. 'And the lights sprang forth.'

Pp. 759-60. 'In him advanced the realities.'

Pp. 760-61. 'Adam's sciences descended.'

Pp. 761-62. 'He rendered creatures incapable and because of it understandings grew weak. And from among us no predecessor has comprehended him, nor will anyone who comes after him.'

Pp. 762-65. 'And the meadows of the Celestial Realm provoke admiration by means of the flower of his beauty and the water basins of the Realm of Omnipotence gush with the outpourings of his lights.'

Pp. 765-66. 'Oh Lord God, join me to his lineage and fulfill me through his noble descent.'

[2] Pp. 766-67. Al-Dabbāgh explains al-Shādhilī's words in *al-Hizb al-kabīr*: 'It's not nobility only to do good to someone who's done good to You.'

[3] Pp. 767-69. He explains the meaning of Ibn al-Fāriḍ's verses:

'We drank a wine in recollection of the beloved

That made us drunk before the grapevine's creation.'

[4] Pp. 770-73. The story of the man who descended into the Tigris River for an hour. When he came up again, he claimed he'd been in Egypt for several months and had a wife and child there. Al-Dabbāgh describes a vision he experienced between sleep and waking in which he saw everything that would happen to him in his life.

[5] Pp. 773-75. Al-Dabbāgh refutes the words of al-Ghazzālī: 'Our Lord Gabriel is more knowledgeable than the chief of the first and the last...'

[6] Pp. 775-78. Why is the *takbīr al-ʿīd* seven times during the first *rakʿa* and six times during the second *rakʿa*? And what's the secret of the *takbīr* three times after the fifteen religious duties from noon on the Day of Immolation until dawn of the fourth day?

[7] P. 778. Al-Dabbāgh comments on Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī's words: 'We've plunged into oceans on whose shores the prophets

came to a halt.' In reality it's the Prophet who plunged into those oceans.

[8] Pp. 778-825. Al-Lamaṭī's extensive treatment of the controversial words of al-Ghazzālī: 'There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is (*laysa fī'l-imkān abda' mimma kān*).'

Pp. 779-80. Al-Lamaṭī cites numerous passages in the Qur'ān that indicate that God is capable of bringing forth something 'more wonderful than what is'.

Pp. 780-86. Six versions of a *ḥadīth* suggesting the Muslim community could have been spared the disagreement that led to conflict and disaster in the early years of Islam. The world might well have been 'more wonderful'.

Pp. 786-87. Ordinary Muslims know God's omnipotence means He's capable of creating a better world. Al-Ghazzālī's great reputation sometimes blinds religious scholars to this fact.

Pp. 787-90. A lengthy quotation from al-Ghazzālī's *Iḥyā'* stating that God has created the best of all possible worlds. If He were unable to create a perfect world, He wouldn't be omnipotent. If He could do so but chose not to, it would amount to miserliness and contradict divine generosity. Responses to al-Ghazzālī's views fall into three different groups.

Pp. 790-92. The first group consists of scholars who reject al-Ghazzālī's view outright, criticizing him for using the methods of the philosophers and the Mu'tazilites.

Pp. 792-803. The second group of scholars approve of al-Ghazzālī's words and attempt to explain them in an acceptable way. Al-Lamaṭī refutes their views. Among them are such well-known scholars as al-Sha'rānī, Aḥmad Zarrūq and al-Suyūṭī.

Pp. 803-21. An even more detailed refutation of al-Samhūdī under three separate headings or points. Point one (pp. 803-07) exposes his circular argument. Point two (pp. 807-20) attacks the error of rationally construed good and bad, and includes two reasons why al-Samhūdī's attempt to justify al-Ghazzālī with Ḥanafite doctrines is wrong. Point three (pp. 820-21) asserts that al-Samhūdī hasn't properly understood his opponent Ibn Munayyir.

Pp. 821-25. The third group consists of those who believe the controversial words are falsely ascribed to al-Ghazzālī. Al-Lamaṭī himself belongs to this group. Other writings by al-Ghazzālī are cited which make it clear that he never held this view.

Pp. 825-26. Al-Lamaṭī reports how al-Dabbāgh, who by now had died, appeared to him in a vision between sleep and waking, and instilled reverence in him for the great al-Ghazzālī.

## (185) CHAPTER SEVEN

On his explanation—God be pleased with him—of some of the words of the spiritual masters—God be pleased with them—which were unclear to us. [Likewise, al-Lamaṭī's survey of the age-old debate around al-Ghazzālī's controversial words: *laysa fī'l-ḥimān abda<sup>c</sup> mim mā kān.*]

[1]

Among these were some words he explained for us—God be pleased with him—in the *taṣliya* of the perfect Pivot, the heir who has reached the goal, our lord ʿAbd al-Salām b. Mashīsh<sup>1</sup>—God be pleased with him!

And I heard him give an explanation—God be pleased with him—of Ibn Mashīsh's words: 'Oh Lord God, bless him from whom the secrets have burst forth!' Reporting from Sayyidī Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Baṣrāwī—God be pleased with him—al-Dabbāgh said: 'When God the Sublime wished to bring forth the blessings and secrets of the earth, such as the springs, wells and rivers, the trees, fruits and flowers, He sent seventy thousand angels and another seventy thousand angels and another seventy thousand angels, i.e. three groups of seventy thousand, and they descended and roamed the earth. The first seventy thousand uttered the name of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and by name we mean the ascending name in accordance with the explanation that will be given of: "And Adam's sciences descended." The second seventy thousand mentioned his closeness to his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—and his rank with God. The third seventy thousand invoked blessings upon him—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And his light was with the three groups.

Existent things were then formed due to the blessing of mentioning his name—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and due to the name's presence among them and their beholding his closeness to his Lord—He is mighty and glorious!' He said: 'And they mentioned his name to the earth, and the earth became stable. They mentioned it to the heavens, and the heavens were raised aloft. They mentioned it

<sup>1</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 147, CXII; died 665/1228.



to the bodily joints of Adam's offspring, and the joints became supple with permission from God the Sublime. And they mentioned it to the places where his eyes are located, and they opened with the lights that they contain. This then is the meaning of his words: "...from whom the secrets have burst forth."

(186) Then I said: 'So this is the meaning of the words in the *Dalā'il al-khayrāt*: "...and by the name You placed upon the night and it grew dark, and upon the day and it became bright, and upon the heavens and they were raised aloft, and upon the earth and it became stable, and upon the mountains and they were fixed, and upon the rivers and they flowed freely, and upon the springs and they gushed forth, and upon the clouds and they poured down rain."'<sup>2</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Yes. That name is the name of our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and due to his blessing (*baraka*) existent things were formed. But God knows best!'<sup>3</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that words of Sayyidī Aḥmad b. °Abd Allāh the Support—God be pleased with him—have been previously presented, including what he said to his disciple: 'Oh my son, if it weren't for the light of our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—no secret from among the earth's secrets would become manifest. If not for his light, none of the springs would gush up and none of the rivers would flow. It's his light, oh my son, which is diffused upon the seeds three times in the month of March and they then bear fruit through his blessing. If not for his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—they wouldn't bear fruit.

Oh my child, the person with the least amount of faith views his faith as a mountain or something bigger [weighing] upon his body. And this is all the more true in the case of those with much faith. At times the body grows weary bearing the faith and it wishes to be rid of it. The light of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is then diffused over the body and becomes the body's helper in bearing the faith. The body then finds the faith pleasant and agreeable.'<sup>4</sup> Consult the beginning of the present book.<sup>5</sup> But God knows best!

<sup>2</sup> *Maṭāli' al-masarrāt*, p. 312, ll. 2-5.

<sup>3</sup> From: 'When God the Sublime wished to bring forth the blessings...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 112, l. 5 to p. 113, l. 5.

<sup>4</sup> From: 'Oh my child, the person with the least amount...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 113, ll. 6-17.

<sup>5</sup> See p. 137.

Another time, by way of explaining: ‘...him from whom the secrets have burst forth’, I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘Were it not for him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—no difference would appear between the dwellers in Paradise and in Hell-fire. They’d all have one and the same rank in both places. Such is the case because when God the Sublime created his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the difference between the people who accepted Him and who were averse to Him occurred in pre-eternity in God’s knowledge, this became known about them due to the fact that He created that light. It was then known in the beyond that some of them would reach such-and-such a degree of humility and such-and-such a degree of divine insight and such-and-such a degree of fear, and that the one quality was from such-and-such a kind, whereas So-and-so drank a different kind from it. And this was before they appeared. They were still in the non-existence of non-being.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The difference in ranks and their diversity is the meaning of “the secrets have burst forth” from him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! But God knows best!’

(187) Another time, by way of explaining: ‘...him from whom the secrets have burst forth’, I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘All the secrets of the prophets, the Friends of God and everyone else were taken from the secret of our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! And he possesses two secrets. One of them is in vision (*mushāhada*) which has been bestowed on him (*mawhūb*). And the other comes from this secret and is acquired (*maksūb*). Let’s imagine vision to be like a piece of cloth and there isn’t one craftsman who hasn’t produced something in it from his craft. Then let’s imagine the possessor of vision to be like someone who drinks this garment completely. And if he drinks the threads the silk-maker produced, for instance, God the Sublime endows him with knowledge of the silk-maker’s craft and knowledge of everything that forms its basis. And if he drinks the threads the weaver produced, for instance, God the Sublime endows him with the craft of weaving and knowledge of everything it’s based on. And so it continues until we’ve covered all the crafts and professions we know as well as those we don’t know. This is what his vision is like—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! We imagine it to contain all the forms of knowledge that existed in God the Sublime’s will in pre-eternity.’

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that the resemblance between these and the said piece of cloth consists in the diversity of matters. Regarding the

said piece of cloth, the crafts and the professions it contains are diverse, while regarding the [Prophet's] noble vision, "the beautiful names" it contains are diverse and in the vision their secrets and their lights appear. Another resemblance is that the diverse crafts are all gathered together in the said cloth, just as all the lights of the beautiful names are gathered together in his vision—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And another resemblance is that knowledge of those diverse crafts confers the capacity to make (*taṣarruf*) their products. And so it is with the beautiful names. The power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) in this world results from being given their lights to drink. Consequently, the resemblance is composed of all three of these things, namely diversity of matters in something, along with their completion in it, and the fact of the power of free disposal being added to the matters. But God knows best!

Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'And his body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—contains everything that accompanies that vision and is provided with all its secrets: mercy toward people, love for them, forgiving them, pardon and clemency, and invoking God for their benefit so that perhaps God the Sublime will strengthen their faith in Him—He is mighty and glorious!' And he said—God be pleased with him: 'And this is what he prayed for—God's blessings and peace be upon him—on behalf of Abū Bakr al-Ṣiddīq—God be pleased with him! People today don't understand the value of this supplication.'<sup>6</sup>

(188) I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that what this means is that when we assume the vision contains all the beautiful names and we assume their possessor—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is like the previous drinker of the said piece of cloth, it then necessarily follows that his body has been given to drink all the lights of the beautiful names and been provided with their secrets. Thus his body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—contains the light of patience, the light of mercy, the light of clemency, the light of forgiveness, the light of pardoning, the light of science, the light of power, the light of hearing, the light of sight, the light of speech, and so on, until we've covered all the beautiful names, and their lights are all contained within his noble body.

Then the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: 'When we look at others, at the angels, the prophets and the Friends of God, we find that some of what's in his noble body has been distributed among them. This occurred because of their having been given a drink

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<sup>6</sup> What this refers to is unclear.

which reached them from his noble body and so the secrets found in their bodies were brought forth from him—God's blessings and peace be upon him!' I even heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If it weren't for the blood in the body, the flesh and the veins—which impedes one from knowledge of the realities of things—the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—from their origin up until the time our Prophet appeared would only have spoken about our Prophet's affair—God's blessings and peace be upon him! They'd only have referred to him and given indication of him. They'd have declared to every one of their followers that they profited from him and that all their assistance came from him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and that in truth they were his deputies and not independent, and that they were like his children and he was like their father and that all people are alike in him and the call of all unto him is one and the same. Now this is how it is in reality. Earlier communities, simply through their demise and their separation from this world, know him with certainty, and in the hereafter he'll appear to them before their eyes. When they enter Paradise, the matter is settled between them and Paradise. Paradise will recoil from them and draw in upon itself. It will say to them: "I don't know you. You're not from the light of Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him!" The matter is settled because even though they lived before him, they were assisted by their prophets and their prophets—peace be upon them—were assisted by the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and thus they were all assisted by him.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'If it weren't for the blood and what occurred in the pre-eternal will, this would already have happened here in the House of the world.'

Then I asked: 'Why does the blood hinder knowledge of the truth?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Because it draws the body to its earthen origin and causes it to incline toward ephemeral matters. The body yearns for building, planting, gathering wealth, and so forth. The blood causes it to incline toward this at every moment, and this is the essence (189) of negligence and veiling from God the Sublime. If it weren't for the blood, the body wouldn't pay any attention to these ephemeral matters.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that it's clear that the veiling caused by the blood varies. It's dense in the case of the common people and weak in the case of the elite. In the case of the prophets it's almost absent—blessings and peace be upon them—and in the case of the lord of the first and the last (Muḥammad) it's altogether non-

existent—God's blessings and peace be upon him! What indicates this has already been dealt with in the present book.<sup>7</sup>

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And with regard to Ibn Mashīsh's words: 'And the lights sprang forth', I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The first thing God the Sublime created was the light of our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! From it He created the Pen, the Seventy Veils, their angels, and then He created the Tablet. And before the Tablet was finished and completely formed, He created the Throne, the spirits, Paradise and Barzakh.

As for the Throne, God the Sublime created it from its own light and He created that light from the revered light. This, i.e. the revered light, is the light of our Prophet and our master Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And He created the Throne as a huge jewel whose size and magnitude exceeds measurement. In the middle of the jewel He created a pearl, and the jewel and the pearl together became like an egg, its white being the jewel and its yolk the pearl. God the Sublime then assisted the pearl and gave it to drink of his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! He began to bore through the jewel and to give the pearl to drink. He gave it to drink one time, then another time, and then another time still, until in the end He'd given it to drink seven times. The pearl melted—with God the Sublime's permission—and it turned into water. It descended to the lowest part of the jewel that constitutes the Throne. Then the revered light which bored through the Throne—to the pearl that turned into water—didn't return. From it God created eight angels and they're the carriers of the Throne. He created them from its purity. From its great weight He created the wind which possesses force and immense exertion. He ordered it—He is exalted—to descend below the water and it settled there and carried the water. The wind then set to work and the cold began to increase in the water.

(190) The water wished to return to its origin and become solid. But the wind wouldn't leave it be and the wind actually broke open its fissures which had become solid. These fissures began to give off a foul odor, and heaviness and stench entered into them. The fissures then increased one after another. They became large and extended themselves and set off for the seven directions and the seven positions. From this God created the seven earths, and the water entered between them and between the oceans. Mist rose from the

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<sup>7</sup> See pp. 552 f.

water because of the exertion of the wind. Then the mist began to accumulate and from it God created the seven heavens. Next the wind began to undertake a great labor as is its practice first and last, and fire in the air increased due to the force of the wind's penetration of the water and air. Whenever a fire was kindled, the angels took it and brought it to a place which is today known as Hell. And this is the origin of Hell. Now the fissures from which the earths had formed they left as they were. And the mist from which the heavens had formed they also left as it was. But the fire that was kindled in the air they took and transported to another place because if they'd left it, it would have devoured the fissures the seven earths came from and the mist from which the seven heavens arose. It would even have devoured the water and drunk it up completely because of the strength of the wind's exertion.

Then God the Sublime created the angels of the [different] earths from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and ordered them to serve him there, and He created the angels of the heavens from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and ordered them to serve him there.

As for the spirits and Paradise—except for some places in it—they were also created from a light, and God created that light from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And as for Barzakh, the upper part is from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

From this it emerges that the Pen, the Tablet, half of Barzakh, the Seventy Veils, all their angels and all the angels of the heavens and the earths were created from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—without any intermediary, and that the Throne, water, Paradise and the spirits were created from a light which was created from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Then after this these created beings were also given a drink from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

As for the Pen, it was given to drink seven times—an immense amount. It's the greatest of the creatures such (191) that if its light were revealed to the earth's mass, the earth would be destroyed and in ruin. And the same holds true for water. It was given to drink seven times, but not the way the Pen was given to drink.

As for the Seventy Veils, they're continually given to drink.

As for the Throne, it was given to drink two times, once at the beginning of its creation and once when its creation was complete, so as to make its body firm. And it's the same with Paradise. It was

given to drink two times, once at the beginning of its creation and once after its creation was complete, so as to make its body firm.<sup>8</sup>

As for the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and likewise all the believers of the earlier communities and of this community, they were given to drink eight times. The **first time** in the world of the spirits when God created the light of the spirits as a totality and gave it to drink. **Secondly**, when He fashioned the spirits from it. When he fashioned each spirit, he gave it to drink of his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! **Thirdly**, on the day of: “Am I not your Lord?” (7/172). Everyone who answered God the Sublime from among the spirits of the believers and the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—was given to drink from his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! But there were those among them who were given much to drink and others who were given little to drink. That’s why a difference has occurred among the believers so that some of them are Friends of God and others aren’t. As for the spirits of the infidels, they abhorred drinking that light and refused to do so. Then when they saw the eternal felicity and the everlasting ascensions experienced by the spirits that drank of it, they regretted what they’d done and asked to be given to drink. But they were given to drink of darkness—God protect us from this! **Fourthly**, when the believer is fashioned in his mother’s womb and his bodily joints are formed and his eyes emerge, his body is given to drink of the noble light so that his joints will be supple and the body’s eyes and ears will open. If not for this, the body’s limbs wouldn’t be supple. **Fifthly**, when he comes out of his mother’s womb, he’s given to drink of the noble light so as to be made to swallow food through his mouth. If not for this, he’d never eat with his mouth. **Sixthly**, when he breast-feeds at his mother’s breast for the first time, he’s also given to drink of the noble light. **Seventhly**, when the spirit is breathed into him. Indeed, if the body weren’t given the noble light to drink, the spirit would never enter it. And even so, it only enters the body after the angels have had great difficulty and trouble with the spirit. If it weren’t for God the Sublime’s order to the spirit and its awareness of this, an angel wouldn’t be able to make it enter the body.’

And another time I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The similitude for the angels who wish to make the spirit enter the body is that they’re like a king’s little servants (192) who are sent to a great pasha to take him to prison. If we consider the little retainers

<sup>8</sup> From: ‘And the lights sprang forth’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 107, l. -4 to p. 108, l. -1.

and consider the great pasha, we find they're incapable of prevailing upon the pasha in any matter whatsoever. But if we consider the king who's sent them and that he rules over the pasha and others, we'll conclude that the pasha and others must be submissive to them. Now if the angels wish to make the spirit enter the body, the spirit suffers great agony and many discomforts and begins to emit a loud rasping sound. Only God the Sublime knows what afflicts it. But God knows best!'—'And **eighthly**, upon his being fashioned again on the Resurrection, he's given to drink of the noble light so that his body is made firm.'<sup>9</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And the prophets and the believers from all the communities, as well as from this community, participate in being given to drink eight times. But there's a difference in that the amount the prophets are given to drink—blessings and peace be upon them—can't be supported by others. For this reason they attain the degree of prophethood and apostleship. As for the others, everyone is given an amount to drink that he can support. As for the difference between the drink given to this honored community and the drink given to anyone of all the other communities, it's due to the fact that this honored community was given to drink of the noble light after it had entered the pure body, i.e. the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him! He then received perfection that can't be described and supported, because the noble light acquired the secret of his pure spirit as well as the secret of his pure body—God's blessings and peace be upon him! This is in contrast to all the other communities, since the light they were given to drink only acquired the secret of the spirit. That's why the believers of this honored community are perfect and honest witnesses, and this community is: "The best community ever brought forth to men" (3/110). Praise and gratitude be unto God!' He said—God be pleased with him: 'And in the same way all created beings were given to drink of the noble light. If it weren't for the noble light that's in them, none of them would be of use for anything.'<sup>10</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: 'When our lord Adam came down to earth—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—the trees [normally] shed their fruits as soon as the fruits first appeared. Then when God the Sublime wished for them to bear fruit

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<sup>9</sup> From: 'As for the prophets...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 108, l. -1 to p. 109, l. -6.

<sup>10</sup> From: 'And the prophets and the believers...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 109, l. -5 to p. 110, l. 2.



[properly], He gave them to drink of his noble light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and from that day they began to bear fruit. (193) Before that they were all male palm-trees that produced buds but then shed them. And if it weren't for his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—which is in the bodies of the infidels—for their bodies were given to drink of it when they were formed in the womb, when the spirit was breathed into them, when they emerged from the womb, and when they were weaned—Hell would come forth against them and devour them. And it won't come forth against them in the hereafter and devour them until that light which caused their bodies to thrive is removed from them. But God knows best!

Another time I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'When God the Sublime created the revered light and afterwards created the Pen, the Throne, the Tablet, Barzakh and Paradise, and then created the angels that dwell at the Throne, in Paradise and in the Veils—the Throne said: "Oh Lord, why did you create me?"' God the Sublime replied: "In order to make you into a veil that veils My loved ones from the lights of the Veils which are above you. For they won't be able to support them since I will create My loved ones from earth." At that time there were no enemies and no house for them, which is Hell, and so the angels thought that His loved ones, whom God the Sublime intended to create from earth, would be created in Paradise and made to dwell there and that He'd veil them with the Throne.

Then God the Sublime created the light of the spirits all at once and he gave it to drink of the revered light. Next God the Sublime separated out individual portions and from each portion He fashioned one of the spirits. And He also gave them to drink of the revered light when He fashioned them. After that the spirits remained like this for a while. Among them there were those who found that drink agreeable and others who didn't find it agreeable. When God the Sublime wished to separate out His loved ones from His enemies and to create their house for His enemies, which is Hell, He gathered together the spirits and said to them: "Am I not your Lord?" (7/172). Whoever found that drink agreeable, and felt friendliness and affection for it, answered with love and contentment. Whoever didn't find it agreeable answered begrudgingly and in fear. Then darkness appeared, which is the foundation of Hell, and the darkness went on increasing every moment. And the light also went on increasing every moment. At that they understood the value of the revered light since they saw

that whoever didn't find it agreeable, deserved [God's] wrath, and Hell was created on their behalf. But God knows best!

Another time I heard him say: 'Although the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—are given to drink of his light, they don't drink the whole of it. Rather each prophet drinks of it as much as is appropriate for him and has been recorded for him. The revered light possesses many qualities and numerous states and many categories. Each individual prophet drinks a special quality and a special kind.'<sup>11</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Our lord Jesus—blessings and peace be upon him—drank of the revered light and he obtained the halting-station of living away from one's homeland. This is a station which causes (194) its possessor to travel and not to be settled in one place. And our lord Abraham—blessings and peace be upon him—drank of the revered light and obtained the halting-station of mercy and humility along with perfect vision (*mushāhada*). You see that when he spoke with someone, he addressed him with gentleness and spoke to him with great humility. The person he spoke to thought he was being humble before him but he was only humble before God—He is mighty and glorious—because of the power of his vision. And our lord Moses—blessings and peace be upon him—drank of the revered light and he obtained the halting-station of beholding God—He is exalted—in His blessings, in His benefactions and in His gifts, the value of which is beyond any reckoning. And so it is with all the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and the noble angels. But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'What's good comes to those who are deserving through the blessing of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and those who are deserving of the good are the angels, the prophets, the Friends of God and the ordinary believers.'

Then I asked: 'And how does one distinguish between them?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The angels have bodies of light and their spirits are of light. The prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—have bodies of earth and their spirits are of light, and between the spirit and the body is another light which is the drink their bodies have been given. And it's the same with the Friends of God except that the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—are superior to them because of the rank of prophethood that can't be

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<sup>11</sup> From: 'Another time I heard him say...' cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 110, ll. -5 to -3.

described and supported. As for the ordinary believers, they have earthen bodies and spirits of light, and their bodies have a kind of disposition due to this light, which the Friends of God and the prophets also possess—blessings and peace be upon them!’

And I asked: ‘What’s the connection between these lights and the light of our Prophet Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and how do they receive assistance from it?’ Then—God be pleased with him—he formulated a commonplace similitude, as was his practice—God give us profit through him! He said: ‘It’s like someone who starves a group of cats for a time until their craving for food is intense. Then he throws a piece of bread among them and they set about eating it rapidly. But the piece of bread doesn’t diminish even by as much as a nail clipping. This is what his light is like—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! The worlds receive assistance from it and yet it doesn’t decrease at all. God—He is sublime and exalted—provides it with increase continually but the increase isn’t apparent in terms of its space becoming wider. Instead, the increase occurs inside it and is never visible, the same way that no decrease is visible. Thus the angels, the prophets, the Friends of God and the believers draw assistance from this revered light and the assistance varies as was previously described.<sup>12</sup> But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: (195) ‘The lights of the sun, the moon and the stars draw assistance from the light of Barzakh, and the light of Barzakh draws assistance from the revered light and from the light of the spirits that are in it, and the light of the spirits draws assistance from his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’ And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘The lights appeared in them (the heavenly bodies) close to the time of Adam’s creation and after the creation of the earth and its mountains. The angels and the spirits were serving God the Sublime when suddenly the lights appeared in the sun, the moon and the stars. The angels who are on earth then fled from the light of the sun toward the shadow of night. Meanwhile, the sun began abolishing the shadow and the angels departed with it until they returned to the place they started from. A great fear came over them and they thought this was a prodigy to do with something awesome. So the angels of each earth gathered together in their earth and behaved as just described. As for the angels of the heavens and the spirits that are in Barzakh, when they saw the angels of earth behave as they did, they came down to

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<sup>12</sup> From: ‘What’s good comes to those who are deserving...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 111, ll. 3 to -11.

earth with them. And as for the spirits of Adam's offspring, they stayed with the angels of the first earth. All of them, the angels of the earth and of the heavens, and the spirits, gathered together on that night. When the sun returned to its original position and nothing happened, they felt safe and returned to their posts. Then it came to pass that they did this every year, and such is the origin of the Night of Power.<sup>13</sup> But God knows best!

.....

And regarding Ibn Mashīsh's words: 'In him advanced the realities', I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The meaning of "realities" is the secrets of God the Sublime which He distributed throughout His creation. These amount to three hundred and sixty-six secrets. They appear among the animals in accordance with what God the Sublime wishes. And they appear among the minerals the same way, and so it is with all created beings.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Among the plants, for instance, there's a secret which is usefulness and this usefulness is one of the realities of God the Sublime. That is to say, it's dependent upon Him because everything real is dependent upon Him—He is exalted'—as will be explained<sup>14</sup>—if God is willing! 'Then this usefulness advanced in the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and reached a halting-station no one else has attained. After all, you saw the usefulness mentioned previously with regard to the assistance every one of the created beings drew from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and this isn't attributed (196) to any other creature.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'In the earth, for instance, is the secret of carrying what's within it, and this is one of the realities of God—He is exalted! In the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—this is advanced to a level that can't be supported so that if the secrets and divine insights which are in him were placed on created beings, they'd collapse and couldn't sustain it. And among the people of vision (*mushāhada*), for instance, is one of the secrets, namely that they aren't forgetful of God the Sublime even for the blinking of an eye. In the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—this matter has advanced to a level that can't be supported, as was described with regard to his noble vision. And among the strictly righteous (*ṣiddīq*) is one of the secrets of God the Sublime, namely truthfulness (*ṣidq*), and in the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—it's advanced to a level that can't

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<sup>13</sup> See p. 517.

<sup>14</sup> See p. 842.

be supported. And among the people of unveiling (*kashf*) is one of the secrets of God the Sublime, namely knowledge of the truth as it really is. In the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—it’s advanced to a level whose high degree is unattainable.

In short, the progressive development of the realities is in proportion to how much someone or something has been given to drink of God the Sublime’s lights.

Since the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is the origin of the lights and they were dispersed from him, the realities necessarily advanced in him to the extent of his light. No one can support his light and no one can support the progressive development of the realities contained in it. But God knows best!’

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And regarding Ibn Mashīsh’s words: ‘Adam’s sciences descended’, I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The meaning of “Adam’s sciences” is what he acquired of the names that he was taught, as referred to in God the Sublime’s words: “And He taught Adam the names, all of them” (2/31). And the meaning of the names is the ascending names, not the descending names. Every creature has an ascending and a descending name. The descending name is the one by which what’s named is generally known. The ascending name is the one by which the origin of what’s named is known and what it comes from, the benefit of what is named and [for example] what the hoe is useful for compared with other things used for the same purpose, and how the blacksmith produces it. Thus simply from hearing the word for it, one can know these sciences and forms of knowledge pertaining to the hoe. Moreover, it’s like this with every created thing. And the meaning of God the Sublime’s words: “All of them” is the names that Adam is able to bear and that other human beings have need of or that they have a connection with. They concern every creature from below the Throne to what’s under the earth. Included in this are Paradise, (197) Hell, the seven heavens, and what’s in them and between them, and what’s between the sky and the earth, as well as what’s on the earth in the way of steppelands and deserts, rivers, oceans and trees.

In this there isn’t one created thing, whether capable of speech or inanimate, about whom Adam doesn’t know from its name these three things: its origin, its benefit, and how its structure and its shape were determined. He knows from the name of Paradise what it was created from and what it was created for. He knows the way its

degrees have been ordered, all the Ḥūrīs<sup>15</sup> it contains and the number of people who'll dwell in it after the Resurrection. And from the word "Hell" he knows the same things and he knows the same from the word "heavens", i.e. why the first heaven was in its place, why the second in its place, and so on about all the heavens. And from the word "angels" he knows what they were created from, what they were created for, and how they were created, as well as the ordering of their ranks and why this angel deserved this station and another one deserved another station. And it's the same [starting] with every angel at the Throne until those under the earth. So these are the sciences of Adam and his descendants among the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and the perfect Friends of God—God be pleased with them, one and all!

And he [Ibn Mashīsh] especially mentioned Adam because he was the first to be taught these sciences, and any of his descendants who learned them, learned them after him. The meaning isn't that only Adam knew them. And we designated them as what he and his progeny were in need of and what they could support, lest because of not specifying this it would necessarily mean he embraced God the Sublime's forms of knowledge. Ibn Mashīsh said "they descended" in order to indicate the difference between the Prophet's knowledge of these sciences—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the knowledge that Adam and the other prophets had of them—blessings and peace be upon them! If the latter turn their attention to these sciences, they acquire something like a station of vision of God—He is sublime and exalted! And if they turn their attention to the vision of God—He is sublime and exalted—they acquire something like sleep with regard to these sciences. Due to his strength, our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—isn't distracted from the one by the other. If he turns his attention to God—He is sublime and exalted—he acquires complete vision and with it he acquires vision of these sciences and others as well that can't be supported. And if he turns his attention to these sciences, he acquires them as well as this vision of God—He is sublime and exalted! Thus the vision of God doesn't veil him from the vision of creation, nor does the vision of creation veil him from the vision of God—He is sublime and exalted!

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Now these sciences descended and were firmly established in no one (198) but the Prophet. As for anyone else, the sciences would

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<sup>15</sup> The Ḥūrīs of Paradise (beautiful young maidens) who have been promised to the believers; cf. EI, s.v. Ḥūr; EQ, s.v. Houris.

desert him if he turned his attention to God—He is sublime and exalted! For this reason: “He rendered creatures incapable”—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—“and because of it understandings (*fuhūm*) grew weak” concerning him, i.e. they disappeared. And people didn’t comprehend him and they didn’t understand him. And *fuhūm* is the plural of *fahm* (understanding), *fahm* being a light of the intellect which is comprehension. “And from among us”, i.e. from the offspring of Adam, “no predecessor”, and they’re the prophets, “has comprehended him, nor will anyone who comes after him”, and they’re the perfect Friends of God. The cause for this is that while his spirit—blessings and peace be upon him—was perfect with regard to the interior perfections, his body—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—was likewise perfect with regard to the bodily perfections. “And the meadows of the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*)”, i.e. the secrets of the translunar world, that is to say the secrets of predestination it contains and [secrets] regarding the creation of every creature in it and the creature’s being placed in its place, and creatures such as the angels and everything else that’s in it, why the heavens are in their place and the Well-guarded Tablet is in its place—“provoke admiration by means of the flower of his beauty”, i.e. God the Sublime has shown them mercy through his light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—“and the water basins of the Realm of Omnipotence (*jabarūt*) gush with the outpouring of his lights.”

Know that the translunar world is designated as the World of Dominion, the World of the Celestial Realm, and the World of the Realm of Omnipotence due to different considerations. It’s designated the world of dominion due to its inhabitants being in agreement. What I mean is that those with speech and those that are mute, those that are inanimate and those with reason, agree to one view and one focus of attention on one worshipped being, which is God—He is sublime and exalted! They agree in their knowledge of Him, their vision of Him and that they’ve been deprived of any choice. This is in contrast to the inhabitants of earth in the sublunar world. Among these are worshippers of the sun, of the moon, and of the stars, and worshippers of the cross and worshippers of an idol, as well as other forms of error. Their viewpoint varies in contrast to the inhabitants of the translunar world.

In short, every world in which the inhabitants agree upon the word God is the world of dominion. And this is none other than the translunar world. And it’s designated the World of the Celestial Realm due to the diversity of the lights of its inhabitants and the

difference of their halting-stations and their states. And it's designated the World of the Realm of Omnipotence due to the lights that waft over its inhabitants the way the air's wind wafts over us in our world. These lights waft over them so that their bodies and their spirits and their insights are given to drink of them and that their halting-stations persist because of them. These—that is to say the lights that waft over them—are like a memory that retains all of their states which have previously occurred. And he [Ibn Mashīsh] accorded “water basins” to these lights which he referred to as the Realm of Omnipotence. And since these lights drew assistance from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he said: “These water basins gushed from the outpouring of his lights—God's blessings and peace be upon him!”

(199) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—about these three worlds is good. Some hold the view that the World of Dominion is what's perceived with the senses, that the World of the Celestial Realm is what's perceived with the mind, and the World of the Realm of Omnipotence is what's perceived through gifts. Others hold the view that the World of Dominion is the visible world perceived by the senses, and that the World of the Celestial Realm is the interior world in minds, and that the World of the Realm of Omnipotence is the intermediary world between them which takes something from each of the two. Still others hold that the Realm of Omnipotence is the plane of the names, while the Celestial Realm is the plane of attributes, since they're intermediaries of action between the names and actions, the way kindness and coercion are intermediaries between the kind and the recipient of kindness, on the one hand, and the coercer and the coerced, on the other. But God the Sublime knows best!

And another time, regarding Ibn Mashīsh's words: ‘And the meadows of the Celestial Realm’, he said: ‘Know that here “meadows” is the equivalent of the beauties of the Celestial Realm, and the Celestial Realm is the translunar world which here means the Well-guarded Tablet with the Pen and Barzakh, and what's located of the Throne above that. For the Well-guarded Tablet has written on it his name—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the names of the prophets and the Friends of God, and the pious worshippers of God as well as all the other believers. From the letters of the Well-guarded Tablet radiate the lights and they come forth in accordance with the different degrees before God—He is mighty and glorious—in the halting-stations of the possessors of names just mentioned. And the lights of the Tablet that are



connected with the letters of the said names vary greatly. Similarly, the lights that emerge from the Pen are very varied like the variation just mentioned. As for Barzakh, no one is able to count the qualities of the lights that come forth from it. These are the lights of the spirits of the prophets and the Friends of God, of the pious worshippers of God and all the other believers. The same is the case with the lights of the Throne. They're different in radiance in accordance with the difference of the dwelling places of the inhabitants of Paradise. Each dwelling place in Paradise has a light of its own. And the light of every dwelling radiates within the Throne. And its lights are varied.

Since the lights of these things vary, his likening them to perceivable meadows that contain numerous flowers and various lights is appropriate. That's why he designated them with the name "meadows" and said: "And the meadows of the Celestial Realm". And since his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was contained in these mentioned things, his name was written on the Well-guarded Tablet and his light came forth from the secrets of the Pen. And his noble spirit has a station in Barzakh, and he has a station in Paradise than which no higher station exists. Thus it's necessary that his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—be found among those mentioned lights. And since it was present with them, those lights acquired beauty and splendor, amazing lustre and wondrous order. Ibn Mashīsh (200) refers to this with his words: "in the flowers of his beauty"—God's blessings and peace be upon him! "And there's nothing which isn't dependent on him", i.e. attached to him for assistance and support, for everything in truth receives his assistance—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and relies upon him. "For, as is said, if it weren't for the intermediary, what's mediated would be lost." Here the intermediary is our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and he called him an intermediary because the existence of things is for his sake—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And he's their greatest means. The meaning of "what's mediated" is whatever isn't him—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

And his words: "as is said" are an indication that someone other than himself had said this and in this way he indicated what was current on the tongues of the elite and the common people, and that if it weren't for him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—Paradise and Hell wouldn't have been created, nor the heavens and the earth, nor time, nor place, nor anything else. "A *taṣliya* worthy of You", i.e. worthy of Your rank and Your greatness, "from You", i.e. issuing from You, not from me, "unto him", i.e. which reaches him.

“Oh Lord God, he is Your all-inclusive secret”, i.e. the one who carries and includes secrets of Yours that no one else includes. Now whenever the circle of vision (*mushāhada*) is extended, the sciences of him who possesses the vision is extended. And there’s nothing greater than his vision—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! In our view he knows what lies between the Throne (‘*arsh*) and the outspread earth (*farsh*). He’s informed about everything that’s in it and there’s no one superior to him. All these sciences with regard to him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—are like an *alif* among the sixty *hizbs* that make up the noble Qur’ān. But God knows best!”

And know—God give you success in this—that in connection with Ibn Mashīsh’s words: ‘And from among us no predecessor has comprehended him, etc.’, it wasn’t possible for me to question al-Dabbāgh as I wished—God be pleased with him—about what I recorded of his explanation regarding these passages in the blessed *taṣliya*. This was the case because someone who didn’t believe in the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—was present in our gathering and the man didn’t speak his language, as we have offered as an excuse on other occasions. If the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—had proceeded in accordance with what we heard from him about the beginning of the *taṣliya*, we’d have heard from him the wonder of wonders. But God knows best!

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And with regard to Ibn Mashīsh’s words: ‘Oh Lord God, join me to his lineage (*nasab*) and fulfill me through his noble descent (*ḥasab*)’, I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The meaning of lineage is the vision established in his interior—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—that all other creatures are incapable of. The shaykh ‘Abd al-Salām [Ibn Mashīsh]—God be pleased with him—was a unifying Pivot and perfect heir of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—so that he was given to drink of his noble vision.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The meaning of noble descent is his attributes—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—such as mercy, science, clemency, and other attributes from (201) his chaste and pure character traits that are approved by God. Since his vision—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—can’t be supported by anyone, Ibn Mashīsh sought to be joined to it without having achieved it because he was unable to achieve it.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘But be on guard not to think that the shaykh’s free-ranging vision, his concentrated striving, and his absolute

resolve were directed toward anything other than the Prophet's noble person (*dhāt*)—God's blessings and peace be upon him—as for instance unveiling (*kashf*), the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) and Friendship with God. For these [drives] were exclusively focused on the Prophet's person.'

And another time, regarding: 'Oh Lord God, join me to his lineage', I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'This means striving and power.' And regarding: 'Fulfill me through his noble descent', he said: 'This means what was loaded onto him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and what he carried.' Then he formulated a similitude: 'A man possessed innumerable camels. He left them to reproduce for a while. In the meantime, he fashioned sumptuous garments, bright clothes and splendid loads [of merchandise], and he looked for someone who would be able to carry everything he'd fashioned. Among all his camels he only found one and he loaded everything onto it. And the camel carried it without any difficulty and trouble.'

## [2]

And regarding the words of the shaykh Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Shādhilī<sup>16</sup>—God be pleased with him: 'It's not nobility only to do good to someone who's done good to You,<sup>17</sup> etc.', I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'These words emerged from the shaykh during his vision of God's immense mercy. When his spirit experienced this vision, his body spoke due to its weakness and he didn't undertake the necessary good behavior—like a person who's aware that mourning and lamentation are forbidden but indulges in them when some affliction obliges him, knowing they're prohibited but giving in to his body's weakness.'

And on another occasion he formulated a similitude—God be pleased with him: 'A man was informed of a king who had a group around him and would give everyone quantities of wealth beyond any reckoning. The man went before the king and felt uneasiness and confusion, as well as fear of not receiving a gift. This made him stray from his usual practice. He said to the king: "If you don't give me a gift, you aren't a generous man!" But God knows best!'

Al-Dabbāgh said this because these words in *al-Ḥizb al-kabīr* [by al-Shādhilī] are a passage which causes difficulty such that the shaykh Ibn 'Abbād<sup>18</sup> says—God be pleased with him: 'He must

<sup>16</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 142, LXXXIV; died 656/1258; *Ḥizb al-barr*=*al-Ḥizb al-kabīr*.

<sup>17</sup> Al-Fāṣī, *Sharḥ*, p. 48, ll. -3 f.

<sup>18</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 147, CXIII; Ibn 'Abbād al-Rundī died 792/1390.

(202) drop “to You” in his words: “He did good to You and he did bad to You”, because no one does good to God and does bad to Him. Proof of this are God the Sublime’s words: “If you do good, you do good to yourselves, and if you do bad, it is to yourselves as well” (17/7). None the less, no one is able to change the shaykh’s words because through the light of Friendship with God he sees what no one else sees.’ And Ibn ‘Abbād also says: ‘About this section I’ve frequently seen written in sound manuscripts: “Whoever behaves toward God with expansiveness and takes liberties (*idlāl*), let him halt at these words. But whoever isn’t like this, let him leave these and adopt what comes after them in God the Sublime’s words: ‘Lord, we have wronged ourselves’ (7/23).”’

And al-Burzulī<sup>19</sup> says: ‘In some manuscripts—and they were ones we received from our shaykh Abū’l-Ḥasan al-Ṭabarī<sup>20</sup>—from the shaykh Abū’l-‘Azā’im Mādī<sup>21</sup>—from the shaykh Abū’l-Ḥasan [al-Shādhilī]—we’ve seen concerning this passage: “One concedes to this shaykh in the present passage but analogies shouldn’t be drawn on the basis of it.” But God knows best!’

[3]

And I questioned al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—about the meaning of Ibn al-Fāriḍ’s words:

‘We drank a wine in recollection of the beloved

That made us drunk before the grapevine’s creation.’<sup>22</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘This is a reference to something in the world of the spirits, and the meaning of the beloved is our Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Recollection of him in that world is a cause of obtaining complete vision. Because of this vision the spirit is transferred from a given state it was in to a state that comes over it. In this [new] state its habits and all its insights are transformed, and it acquires an awesome strength to penetrate lights and to cut itself off from things other than God. It cuts itself off from the first state until it’s as if it’s completely unfamiliar with it. Thus likening this vision to wine is appropriate for three reasons: 1) wine is a cause of transference from one state to another, and this vision is like that. 2) Wine is a cause (203) of being cut off from the first state, and this vision is like that. 3) Wine is a cause of bravery, daring and fearlessness because if

<sup>19</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 147, CXIV; died 841/1438.

<sup>20</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>21</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>22</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 147, CXV; the poet Ibn al-Fāriḍ died 632/1235; this is the opening verse of his famous *Khamriyya*; cf. *Dīwān*, p. 158.

wine rises in the drinker's head, everyone becomes contemptible in his eyes. Similarly, this vision is a cause of its possessor boldly approaching all the lights, penetrating them and casting aside all things other than God. This is the meaning of his words: "We drank a wine in recollection of the beloved", i.e. we acted boldly due to the vision in God—He is sublime and exalted—in recollecting His beloved—God's blessings and peace be upon him! As well as the meaning of his words: "Which made us drunk", i.e. due to it we were cut off from anything other than God the Sublime and we were attached to Him alone. And this is the meaning of his words: "before the grapevine's creation", i.e. because this occurred in the world of the spirits, whereas the grapevine was created in the world of visible shapes.

Then this vision which the spirit was given to drink because of recollecting the beloved—God's blessings and peace be upon him—remained in the spirit until it entered the body and forgetfulness came over it since the body is cut off in its lusts. When the person recollects the beloved and hears someone who recollects him, the vision that's in the spirit begins to descend into the body and settles there little by little, until the three things that happened to the spirit happen to the body and it transfers from one state to another, is cut off from the first state and from whatever is other than God, and becomes attached to the One, the Coercer—He is sublime, there is no god but He! But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'I never cease to be amazed at the Friend of God who says: "Verily, I fill the universe!" The reason [for amazement] is that the universe has a door through which access to it occurs, and the door is the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and no creature in creation is able to sustain his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! But if someone is too weak to sustain the door, how can he sustain anything else besides the door? Unless, oh Lord God, he intends to enter by other means than the door, that is to say if his illumination is satanic and laden with darkness. This person won't even fill his room, much less his house—to say nothing of anything beyond that!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And know that the lights of all created things, from the Throne (*'arsh*) and the terrestrial expanses (*farsh*), the heavens and the earths, the paradises and the Veils, and what's above and below them—were they all to be gathered together, you'd find some of the Prophet's light—God's blessings and peace be upon him! But if the whole of his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—were placed upon the

Throne, the Throne would dissolve. And if it were placed upon the Seventy Veils that are above the Throne, they'd break up. (204) And if all created beings were gathered together and that immense light were placed upon them, they'd break up and collapse. Now if this is what his light is like—God's blessings and peace be upon him—how can the person who utters these words claim that he fills the universe? Where's his body when he reaches Medina the Honorable and he approaches the noble grave? Or how will his body be when it ascends to Barzakh and approaches the place that contains the awesome light that subsists in the Prophet's noble spirit? Will his body be able to sustain it, whereas all created beings together are too weak to sustain it? Or will he by-pass this place and not fill the universe—the assumption being that the universe extends from the noble grave to the dome of Barzakh under the Throne? But perhaps by universe he means what lies between the heavens and the earth without the place in Barzakh that contains the resplendent light.'

I said: 'Perhaps he means he fills it with respect to light, that is to say he fills it with his light, not with his body—the way the sun shines upon the heavens and the earth.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'So his meaning is that he fills it with his light and he doesn't mean he fills it with his body. But then what a difference there is between his light and the light of the Chosen One! The person's light compared with the revered light is like a wick in the midst of day at noontime. Is it proper to say: "This wick has eclipsed the light of the sun."?''

And I asked: 'The light of the sun compared with the revered light is like a wick. So how does it fill the worlds?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It doesn't fill the worlds in the sense that the revered light departs because of it and disappears. How could it, since the light of the sun is the light of the spirits of the believers which itself comes from his light—God's blessings and peace be upon him—? But the reason for this is that we've become veiled from beholding the revered light, just as we're veiled from beholding the lights of the Friends of God. If the veil were removed, the [other] lights compared with the revered light would be like wicks in the midst of day. Neither the sun, nor anything else, would possess any light except what wicks possess in the midst of day.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'I once made the utmost effort from the time of the morning prayer up to the (205) forenoon to see whether I could sustain "the door" [of the universe] but I was unable and found it too strong for me.'

[4]

And I questioned him about the story of the man who descended into the river and subsequently emerged after an hour. His companion who'd been waiting for him said to him: 'You've kept me waiting so long, I was afraid I'd miss the Friday prayer.' Then the man said to his companion: 'I've come from Egypt. I actually spent such-and-such a number of months there. I got married and I have a child in Egypt.'<sup>23</sup>

I asked: 'How is this possible? The hour that elapsed is one and the same for both of them. How can it be an hour for this person and a number of months for someone else? Can it be that for the sun which is on the horizon an hour and a month are the same? And if it was a number of months for the one who dove into the river, how was it for the inhabitants of Egypt? If it did amount to a number of months so that he got married during them and has a child, one must accept the inconceivable. But it isn't possible that for the inhabitants of Egypt and the residents on the Tigris, which was the river in question, the risings and the settings of the sun should have so great a difference between them. If for the inhabitants of Egypt it was an hour, how was it possible for him to get married and beget a child in that time?

Among the miracles of the Friends of God that I've heard about, this is one of the most difficult to understand. Shortening time isn't like shortening space. Shortening time necessarily brings with it the difficulty referred to, whereas shortening space is a pure miracle that entails no difficulty. And the said story has been recounted by more than one person. Sometimes certain people use the length of the Day of Resurrection to justify it. Its duration is fifty thousand years, which for a believer is like an hour and like two *rak'as* of prayer at dawn. But this doesn't constitute proof because it's been said that the length of the Resurrection is a length based on intensity, not one based on a period of time. My firm opinion is that Ibn Ḥajar has treated the question too briefly in the *Fatḥh [al-bārī]*.<sup>24</sup> But God knows best!

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Nothing's impossible for God the Sublime. He (206) can bring about another time and another people for the man of the story, while he's in the river, and veil him from seeing the river even while he's in it, the same way God the Sublime veils whomever He wishes from seeing the angel who's constantly with him. And if He veils him from seeing the river, He causes him to see that [other] time and those people. God the

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Gramlich, *Wunder*, pp. 282 f.

<sup>24</sup> Not found in the *Fatḥh*.

Sublime makes them appear as He wishes, as the inhabitants of Egypt or as other people, in order that the intention of the story emerges. Then God the Sublime removes that time and those people. Moreover, He does this—He is exalted—and similar things because of something that befell the man of the story.’

I said: ‘What you say is true—God be pleased with you! They said as much, namely that he denied something the Friends of God can do, despite the great amount of service he rendered them.’

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘I’ve seen something even more strange than this. I saw a person during mid-morning who hadn’t yet married and when I returned at noon to the same place, I found the person had died. And I found his son had replaced him in his trade and the son had already become an adult, whereas his father wasn’t even married at mid-morning. Then after that he married, had a son, and his son reached adulthood by noon.’

I asked: ‘Were they from among the Jinn or human beings?’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘They’re not from among the Jinn or human beings. God possesses worlds that can’t be counted. “No one knows the hosts of your Lord but He” (74/31).’

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘Something very strange happened to me in the year 1111/1699-1700 after the death of my mother. This was that my father married another woman and he had a maid that was unjust. The maid then came and beat me. I exclaimed: “Which grief am I to suffer, that of the maid or that of the [new] wife?” I was troubled and disturbed. Then I dozed off slightly and I saw everything that would happen to me until my allotted time was up. I saw the shaykhs I was going to meet and the woman I’d marry. And the time passed until the birth of my son ‘Umar, and I sacrificed on the seventh day after his birth. Then I saw everything that would happen to me after ‘Umar’s birth up to the birth of my son Idrīs, and I sacrificed on the seventh day after his birth. This was followed by everything that would happen until the birth of my daughter Fāṭima. And I saw the illumination I was going to receive after her birth and everything I would attain—nothing of it was concealed from me—and everything that had occurred to me and would occur during my life. All this took place within (207) a brief moment, and I wasn’t asleep so that this was a dream vision.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that this was a vision that occurred through the spirit.

Similarly, I heard him say another time—God be pleased with him: ‘When a babe comes forth from its mother’s womb, that very moment the perfect knower of God sees the way its life will unfold



and its death will arrive. He sees in it everything of the good and the bad that will befall it. Thus if someone who saw it the way a knower of God sees wrote down everything he saw and kept the manuscript with him and then compared it with what happened to the person and saw what he underwent every moment and instant, he'd find there was no difference between the two in any particular. But God knows best!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Something close to the creation of those people in the sight of the above-mentioned man<sup>25</sup> is that a certain knower of God passed by a place and felt the desire for a city to be there in which God—He is mighty and glorious—would be worshipped. Now God ordered the angels to descend in the form of Adam's offspring and He said to the city: "Be", and it was. The knower of God passed by the place another time and found the city, and its inhabitants were worshipping God the Sublime. He then praised God and lauded Him in the manner He deserves. The city persisted and its inhabitants went on worshipping God in it until the knower of God died. Then everything reverted to its origin. The angels returned to their posts and the city returned to pure non-existence. Were someone to pass by it a moment after the demise of that knower of God, he'd say: "No building has ever existed here."' "

The following is what I heard him reply to words that were reported to him from [Ibn al-°Arabī] al-Ḥātimī—God be pleased with him—which I'm not now able to ascertain because someone other than myself reported them to him.

I heard him say—but God the Sublime knows best: 'Al-Ḥātimī says in one of his visions that he beheld Paradise in such-and-such a place, i.e. somewhere other than its [actual] place.' Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him—and I, al-Lamaṭī, heard him: 'There's no more noble place for the knower of God among [different] places and times than the place in which that vision occurs. And God the Sublime rewards him with that vision by creating a Paradise in the area of that knower of God. Thus he thinks he's seen Paradise outside its [actual] place, whereas it's something else that was created for him as a reward.' And the person who reported Ibn al-°Arabī's words to him nearly flew off in joy when he heard this reply. But God knows best!

(208) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—by way of confirming the creation of those people in the sight of the

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<sup>25</sup> I.e. the man who entered the river and experienced being in Egypt for a number of months. See earlier in section [4].

aforementioned man: 'Look at this air which is located between you and me.' I replied: 'I've looked.' He indicated a place within it that was one finger wide and said to me: 'God the Sublime orders this amount of air to expand until it's like the air between you and me. Then He places in it—He is exalted—numerous colors: yellow, red, green and black, and He veils the first amount of air from this second amount and everything in it. He then takes a part of the first amount of air and veils it from the first air. He makes it enter this second air and causes it to see the wonders and colors it contains. Next He returns that part to the first air and the second air disappears with everything in it.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Or is our Lord—He is mighty and glorious—not capable of this and more than this?' I replied: 'Yes, indeed! He's capable of everything. But God knows best!'

[5]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the words of the author of the *Ihyā'* in the chapter *al-Tafakkur* where he says: 'Our lord Gabriel is more knowledgeable than the chief of the first and the last—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'<sup>26</sup>

He replied to me—God be pleased with him: 'If our lord Gabriel lived a hundred thousand years and another hundred thousand years and for an infinity, he wouldn't grasp a quarter of the divine insight of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—or of his science about his Lord—He is exalted! How is it possible for our lord Gabriel to be more knowledgeable since he was created from the Prophet's light? He and all the angels are a part of his light, and all the angels and all created beings derive divine insight from him—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Now the beloved—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was with his Beloved—He is mighty and glorious—when Gabriel and everything else were non-existent. At that time the Prophet received a gift from his Lord—He is exalted—a gift worthy of the Generous One vis-à-vis His beloved, and worthy of His splendor and His magnificence. Only much later did God the Sublime set about creating Gabriel from his noble light as well as other of the angels—blessings and peace be upon them!'

(209) He said—God be pleased with him: 'Gabriel and all the angels, and the Friends of God who've received illumination, and even the Jinn, know that our lord Gabriel—peace be upon him—attained halting-stations in divine insight and other things through the blessing of association (*ṣuḥba*) with the Prophet—God's

<sup>26</sup> *Ihyā'* IV, pp. 447 f.; partly reworded; cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 111, ll. -8 ff.

blessings and peace be upon him! If our lord Gabriel—peace be upon him—had lived the full length of his life without having kept company with the chief of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and had striven to attain these halting-stations, expending his effort and power, he wouldn’t have obtained a single station from among them. The benefit he received from the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is only known to him and whomever God has given illumination.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Our lord Gabriel was created in order to serve the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and to be among the guardians of his noble person and his intimates. For the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is God’s secret in this existence. All existing things draw assistance from him and they have need of beholding him. His noble body was created from earth like the bodies of Adam’s offspring. These bodies are familiar with what’s like themselves. If he looks at what isn’t like him, Gabriel keeps him company.’

Then he told us—God be pleased with him: ‘The forms of the angels cause these bodies distress and startle them because of having an unfamiliar form—with many hands and feet and heads and faces—and because of having an immense extent so that they fill what lies between East and West.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Only someone who’s received illumination is aware of this. And our lord Gabriel was the intimate companion of the [Prophet’s] noble earthen body with regard to these kinds of matters. As for his noble spirit—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—it isn’t afraid of anything among these forms or of any other forms because it knows them all.’

And I asked: ‘Why is the noble spirit not sufficient with regard to a companion?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Because the body doesn’t see the spirit as separated from itself. Oneness is only for God alone—He is exalted! Only His being is able to persist in it. Everyone else is one of a pair that seeks its other half and is inclined toward it.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And our lord Gabriel was his companion in what his body could support and with respect to what he knew that was below the Lote-tree of the Extremity. As for the Seventy Veils that are located above it and the angels that are in them, Gabriel wasn’t his companion in that because he, i.e. our lord Gabriel—peace be upon him—couldn’t support seeing what was above the Lote-tree of the Extremity due to the power of the lights.

That's why the Prophet was alone when he traversed these veils and Gabriel—peace be upon him—didn't go with him. (210) He asked Gabriel to come with him but Gabriel said: "I'm not capable of this, whereas you have the capacity for it. God has given you the strength to do it."

And I discussed with al-Dabbāgh the matter of revelation (*wahy*) and how the Prophet received it—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and whether or not he received it through the mediation of Gabriel—which frequently appears to be the case in the Qur'ānic verses. He had things to say about this that minds can't support and that mustn't be written down. But God knows best!

[6]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the reason why the *takbīr al-ʿid*<sup>27</sup> is seven times during the first *rakʿa* and six times during the second *rakʿa*. And I told him something of what the jurists (*fuqahāʾ*) say on this subject.

Speaking without hesitation, he replied—God be pleased with him: 'The reason for this is that in the first *takbīr* the bondsman pronouncing it, and especially the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—, sees the created things on the first earth and in the first heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them—He is sublime and exalted! In the second *takbīr* he sees the created things on the second earth and in the second heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them, for these are His actions—He is blessed and exalted! In the third *takbīr* he sees the created things on the third earth and in the third heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them, for these are His actions—He is blessed and exalted! In the fourth *takbīr* he sees the created things on the fourth earth and in the fourth heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them, for these are His actions—He is blessed and exalted! In the fifth *takbīr* he sees the created things on the fifth earth and in the fifth heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them, for these are His actions—He is blessed and exalted! In the sixth *takbīr* he sees the created things on the sixth earth and in the sixth heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them, for these are His actions—He is blessed and exalted! And in the seventh *takbīr* he sees the created things on the seventh earth and in the seventh heaven, and he sees Him Who fashioned them, for these are His actions—He is blessed and exalted! This is during the first *rakʿa*.

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<sup>27</sup> Juynboll, *Handbuch*, p. 127, mentions special *takbīrāt* which precede the *ṣalāt al-ʿid* but has nothing to say about their number.

As for the second *rakʿa*, in the first of the *takbīrs* he sees what was created on the first day which is Sunday and he sees Him Who fashioned it—He is sublime and exalted! In the second *takbīr* he sees (211) what was created on the second day which is Monday and he sees Him Who fashioned it—He is sublime! In the third *takbīr* he sees what was created on the third day which is Tuesday and he sees Him Who fashioned it—He is sublime! In the fourth *takbīr* he sees what was created on the fourth day which is Wednesday and he sees Him Who fashioned it—He is sublime and exalted! In the fifth *takbīr* he sees what was created on the fifth day which is Thursday and he sees Him Who fashioned it—He is sublime and exalted! And in the sixth *takbīr* he sees what was created on the sixth day which is Friday and he sees Him Who fashioned it—He is sublime and exalted!’

I asked: ‘Are these things that were created during these six days what are in the seven heavens and on the seven earths?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘When he beholds the days, he sees the fundamental elements that existed at the beginning of creation. But when he looks at the heavens and the earths, he sees the created things found on their surface.’

And I asked: ‘The *takbīr al-ʿīd* seven times and six times is required by law of everyone obligated to follow the legal prescriptions, but what’s required of such persons as far as this vision is concerned?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘We aren’t talking here about someone who’s been given illumination. The person who hasn’t received illumination must make use of this vision and visualize it even if only in a general way—for God the Sublime is generous and noble. If the bondman visualizes what I’ve mentioned during this festival (*ʿīd*), and in the festival that follows, etc., and he delights in his Lord and persists in this, God the Sublime won’t disappoint him and won’t bring forth the spirit from his body until He’s caused him to see these visions in all their particulars because God has the ability to do anything. Indeed, distance and being cut off originate with the bondsman, not with the Lord—He is sublime and exalted! “And those who struggle in Our cause, We will surely guide them in Our ways; and God is with those who do good” (29/69).’

(212) And I asked him: ‘What’s the secret behind the *takbīr* three times after the fifteen religious duties<sup>28</sup> from noon on the Day of Immolation until dawn of the fourth day?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘In the first *takbīr* he visualizes to himself and sees the formation of the body as a drop of sperm, then as a clot of blood, and then as a lump of flesh. In the second *takbīr* he visualizes and sees its complete formation and perfection, the excellence of its creation, the spirit’s being breathed into it, and how it finally becomes another created being. “Blessed be God, the best of creators!” (23/14). And in the third *takbīr* he visualizes and sees the decomposition of the [human] form and its return to being earth when it’s in the grave.

Now these three things belong to the wonders of God’s omnipotence—He is blessed and exalted—and to the marvels He’s created among His fashioned works—He is sublime and exalted! There is no god but He! But this *takbīr* isn’t employed by the Sufis solely in accordance with what the jurists have said. Rather they make use of it following every prayer but before pronouncing *al-salām* [at the end].’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The person who’s received illumination sees these states directly and sees them openly. He beholds what’s indescribable from God the Sublime’s dazzling omnipotence. And how many of God the Sublime’s wonders there are among His creatures! Moreover, if a person who’s received illumination experiences something that imposes change on him or constriction (*qabḍ*) or suchlike, he looks at these wonders and obtains what’s indescribable in the way of knowledge of God’s oneness (*tawhīd*), an instructive lesson and removal of what afflicted him. Even someone who hasn’t received illumination repels it by seeing and direct vision.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘On the surface of the earth there are wonders such that if the masters of proofs and arguments beheld them, they’d have no need of proof. Among these is a wonder such that if the bondsman beheld it, he’d know God the Sublime’s Unicity—with no need of proof, but beholding that thing would suffice for him. Among them is a wonder such that if the bondsman beheld it, he’d know the existence of Paradise and have no need to furnish proof of its existence. And among them is a wonder such that if the bondsman beheld it, he’d know the existence of Hell and have

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<sup>28</sup> Specific obligatory religious duties during and after the Feast of the Immolation (10th of Dhū’l-Hijja) which concludes the rites of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

no need of a proof. And so it is with other wonders among the created beings of our Lord—He is sublime and exalted! But God knows best!’

[7]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the words of Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī—God be pleased with him: ‘We’ve plunged into oceans on whose shores the prophets came to a halt.’<sup>29</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Prophethood is a matter of immense importance. Its value is huge and its possessor noble. His halting-station is lofty and his honor is unassailable. No one attains its worth and no one catches up with (213) the dust it leaves behind. And how far is the Friend of God from reaching its halting-station and how great a difference there is between him and prophethood’s honorable men! But Abū Yazīd knew that the chief of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—is the chief of the prophets, the leader of the dispatched apostles, and the best of all God’s creatures. Now perhaps the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—lends some item of clothing to certain perfect men of his noble community, and if they wear it, they experience what Abū Yazīd al-Bisṭāmī said. But in reality this is to be ascribed to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and it’s he who plunges into those oceans and is the head of all the prophets—blessings and peace be upon them!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘There are some Friends of God among those with illumination who’ve fallen into error and think that the Friend who’s a great knower of God may attain the halting-station of a prophet with regard to divine knowledge, even though a prophet holds a rank that the Friend can’t reach.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘This thought of theirs is an error and contrary to the truth of the matter. What’s correct is that though the Friend attains the knowledge of God he attains, he doesn’t reach what they’ve claimed. He doesn’t even come close to it. But God knows best!’

[8]

And I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the following words that are ascribed to the Proof of Islam, Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī—God be pleased with him: ‘There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is (*laysa fī’l-imkān abda’ mim mā kān*).’<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *Shataḥāt al-ṣūfiyya*, p. 31, ll. -3 f.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Translators’ Introduction p. xi and Outline pp. 76 ff.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Divine omnipotence isn’t restricted and there’s nothing the Lord can’t do—He is sublime and exalted!’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that these words contain the greatest perfection and divine knowledge (*‘irfān*). Indeed, I had several times asked God the Sublime for guidance as to whether I should write something about this question out of love of the good and by way of giving counsel to others. For (214) it’s an article of faith and likewise it belongs to the category of things that are self-evident. But because there’s been so much discussion about it and the answers of the eminent have varied regarding it, for this reason it nigh well belongs to the subtlest of theoretical speculations. Thus, seeking God’s help and taking refuge with His strength and power, I say the following:

.....

God the Sublime has said in His precious book—which is unaffected by any falsehood from the front or from behind: ‘If he divorces you, perhaps his Lord will give him in exchange wives better than you, women who have submitted [to God], believers, obedient, remorseful, worshipping, fasting, who were married, as well as virgins’ (66/5).

And God the Sublime has said: ‘Oh believers, obey God and obey the Apostle, and do not make your own work vain’ (47/33), up to His words—He is mighty and glorious: ‘And if you turn away, He will replace you with another people. Then they will not be like you’ (47/38).

And God the Sublime has said: ‘No! I swear by the Lord of the East and the West, surely We are able to replace them with better. We will not be outstripped’ (70/41).

And God the Sublime has said: ‘And your Lord is rich and merciful. If He wishes, He can remove you and have you followed by whatever He wishes, the way He made you arise from the seed of another people’ (6/133).

And God the Sublime has said: ‘But had God so willed, He would have gathered them together in right guidance’ (6/35).

And God the Sublime has said: ‘Say: “To God belongs the conclusive argument, for if He wished He would have guided you all’ (6/149).

And God the Sublime has said: ‘If We had wished, We would have raised up a warner in every city’ (25/51).



And God the Sublime has said: 'If We wish, We will send down on them from heaven a sign so their necks will stay humbled before it' (26/4).

And God the Sublime has said: 'If your Lord had wished, whoever is on the earth would have believed, all of them, all together' (10/99).

And God the Sublime has said: 'Oh people, you are the ones who have need of God; He is all-sufficient and all-laudable. If He wishes, He can remove you and bring a new creation. And that is no great matter for God' (35/15).

And God the Sublime has said: 'If We had wished, We could have given every soul its guidance' (32/13).

And God the Sublime has said: 'God creates whatever He wishes; God can do everything' (24/45).

And God the Sublime has said: 'And He creates what you do not know' (16/8).

.....

And it's reported in a sound *ḥadīth*: 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said to them during his [final] sickness: "Bring me [what I need] so I may write a book for you after which you won't go astray."<sup>31</sup> And °Umar replied: "The Book of God is enough for us!" Ibn °Abbās says: 'It was the greatest of calamities that something stopped the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—from writing a book for them.' And it's also reported in a sound *ḥadīth*: (215) 'The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—went outside to show them the Night of Power. Then two men reviled one another and it was taken away.' These two *ḥadīths* occur in the *Ṣaḥīḥ* of al-Bukhārī.<sup>32</sup>

And in *al-Bāhir fī ḥukm al-nabī ṣl'm bi'l-bāṭin wa'l-zāhir* the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says:<sup>33</sup> 'The fourth *ḥadīth*: Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba says in his *Musnad*<sup>34</sup> that Zayd b. al-Ḥubāb<sup>35</sup> reported from Mūsā b. °Ubayda<sup>36</sup>—from Hūd b. °Aṭā° Allāh al-Yamānī<sup>37</sup>—from Anas who said:

"With us was a youth endowed with worship, abstemiousness and striving. We mentioned his name to the Apostle of God—God's

31 *Concordance* V, p. 533.

32 *Faṭḥ* VIII, p. 477, no. 4432; *Faṭḥ* IV, p. 801, no. 2023.

33 'Ibrīziana', p. 147, CXVIII; cf. *Bāhir*, pp. 12 f.

34 See p. 325, fn. 212.

35 *Wāfi* XV, p. 44, no. 51; died 103/721.

36 TT X, p. 356, no. 636; died 152/769 or 153/770.

37 *Mizān* IV, p. 310, no. 9256.

blessings and peace be upon him—but he didn't know him. We described what he looked like but he still didn't know him. While we were engaged in this, the youth arrived and we said: 'Oh Apostle of God, here he is!' The Apostle said: 'But I see a dark stain of Satan on his face.' And the youth came and pronounced a greeting. The Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said to him: 'Have you decided in your soul that there's no one better than you in the group?' He replied: 'Oh Lord God, yes!' He then turned about and entered the mosque.

The Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Who will kill this man?' Abū Bakr replied: 'I will.' He entered [the mosque] and behold there was the youth standing up, praying. Abū Bakr said: 'How can I kill a man while he's performing the prayers. Indeed, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has forbidden us to kill people who are praying.' Then the Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Who will kill this man?' 'Umar said: 'I will, oh Apostle of God.' And he entered the mosque. But behold, the youth was prostrating himself. 'Umar said the same thing Abū Bakr had said and added: 'I will draw back, for someone who's better than I am has drawn back.' And the Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Go easy, 'Umar!' And he mentioned to him...[text corrupt]. And the Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Who will kill this man?' 'Alī said: 'I will.' The Apostle said: 'You'll kill him, if you find him.' 'Alī entered the mosque and found that he'd left.

The Apostle said: 'By God, had you killed him, he'd have been the first and the last of them, and no two people in my community would disagree.'"

Abū Ya'cālā published this in his *Musnad* with a chain of transmission from Mūsā—from Hūd. Now there's "weakness" in Mūsā and his shaykh. But the *ḥadīth* has been reported with other chains of transmission that require its certainty.

And a second chain of transmission goes back to Anas: Abū Ya'cālā in his *Musnad*<sup>38</sup> says that Abū Khaythama<sup>39</sup> reported from 'Umar b. Yūnus<sup>40</sup>—from 'Ikrima, who is Ibn 'Ammār—from Yazīd al-Raqāshī<sup>41</sup>—from (216) Anas who said:

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38 See p. 206, fn. 16.

39 TT XII, p. 89.

40 Read 'Yūnus' instead of 'Yūsuf'; TT VII, p. 506, no. 845; died 206/821.

41 ThG II, pp. 89-91; died between 110/729 and 120/738.

"There was a man in the time of the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who went on military campaign with us. When he returned, he'd dismount from his camel and go to the mosque. He'd begin performing the prayers there and make the prayers last a long time so that the Companions of the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—considered he was superior to them. One day the man passed by and the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was seated among his Companions. One of the Companions said to him: 'Oh Prophet of God, this is that man.' Then either the Prophet sent for him, or he came on his own initiative. And when the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—saw him coming, he said: 'By Him Who holds my soul in His hand, there's a dark stain from Satan between his two eyes.' When the man halted before the seated group, the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—asked him: 'When you halted before the seated group, did you say to yourself: "No one in this group is better than me."?' He replied: 'Yes, I did.' Then he left and went to one side of the mosque. He drew a line with his foot and then positioned his heels along it and stood praying.

The Apostle of God asked—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Which of you will go and kill this man?' Abū Bakr stood up. The Prophet then said: 'Did you kill the man?' He replied: 'I found him praying and I was in awe of him.' The Apostle of God then asked—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Which of you will go and kill him?' 'Umar replied: 'I will.' He took his sword but then he found the man standing up, praying, and so he returned. The Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—asked 'Umar: 'Did you kill the man?' He replied: 'Oh Prophet of God, I found him standing up, praying, and I was in awe of him.' The Apostle of God asked—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Which of you will go to this man and kill him?' 'Alī replied: 'I will.' The Apostle of God said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'You can do it, if you catch him.' And 'Alī went after him but didn't find him.

The Apostle of God then said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'This is the first division to emerge in my community. Had you killed him, no two people would be in disagreement in my community. The Israelites divided into seventy-one factions. This community will be split into seventy-two factions, all of them except one destined for Hell.' We asked: 'Oh Prophet of God, which group is that?' He replied: 'The Community (*al-jamā'a*).'"

A third chain of transmission goes back to al-Raqāshī—from Anas. Al-Bayhaqī says in the *Dalā'il al-nubuwwa*<sup>42</sup> that ʿAbd Allāh al-Ḥāfiz<sup>43</sup> and Abū Saʿīd Muḥammad b. Mūsā b. Faḍl<sup>44</sup> informed him: “Abū l-ʿAbbās Muḥammad b. Yaʿqūb<sup>45</sup> reported—from Rabīʿ b. Sulaymān<sup>46</sup>—from Bishr b. Bakr<sup>47</sup>—from al-Awzāʿī—from al-Raqāshī—from Anas b. Mālīk who said:

‘They mentioned a man to (217) the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and told of his strength in holy war and his great effort in performing worship. Then behold, the man appeared coming toward them and they said: “This is the man we mentioned to you.” The Apostle of God said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “By Him Who holds my soul in His hand, I see a dark stain from Satan on his face.” The man drew near and greeted them. The Apostle of God asked—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Did your carnal soul tell you that there’s no one in the group better than you?” He replied: “Yes, it did.” Then he left and he made a line in the mosque and drew up his feet along it and prayed.

The Apostle of God said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Who will go and kill him?” Abū Bakr replied: “I will.” He went after him and found him standing up, praying. He said: !Oh Apostle of God, I found him standing, performing the prayers, and I was in awe of him.” The Apostle of God asked—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Which of you will go and kill him?” ʿUmar replied: “I will.” He got up but then he did the same as Abū Bakr. And the Apostle of God asked—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: “Which of you will go and kill him?” ʿAlī said: “I will.” The Apostle said: “You can do it, if you catch him.” ʿAlī went off and found the man had left. He returned to the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!

The Apostle said: “This is the first division to emerge in my community. Had you killed him, no two people would be in disagreement in my community after this.” Then he said: “The Israelites divided into seventy-one factions. My community will split into seventy-two factions, all of them except one are destined for Hell.”

Al-Raqāshī added: “The one faction is the Community.”

42 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 139, LXIX; and see p. 399, ftn. 354, and p. 393, ftn. 339.

43 Unidentified.

44 *Siyar* XVII, p. 350, no. 218; died 421/1030.

45 *Siyar* XV, p. 452, no. 258; died 277/890.

46 TT III, pp. 245 f., no. 473; died 270/883.

47 TT I, p. 443, no. 815, died 205/820.

A fourth chain of transmission goes back to Anas. Abū Yaʿlā says in his *Musnad* that Muḥammad b. Bakkār<sup>48</sup> reported from Abū Maʿshar<sup>49</sup>—from Yaʿqūb b. Zayd b. Ṭalḥa<sup>50</sup>—from Zayd b. Aslam<sup>51</sup>—from Anas b. Mālīk who said:

“A man was mentioned to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who caused damage to the enemy and strove in performing worship. The Prophet said: ‘I don’t know him.’ They said: ‘Yes, you do. He’s like this and that.’ And the Prophet said: ‘I don’t know him.’ While we were speaking this way, the man suddenly appeared. They exclaimed: ‘Here he is, oh Apostle of God!’ The Prophet said: ‘I didn’t know this man. He’s the first division I’ve seen in my community. He bears a dark stain from Satan.’ And when the man came closer, he greeted them and they returned his greeting. The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—then said to him: ‘I implore you by God! Did you say to yourself when you appeared before us that no one in the group is better than you?’ He replied: ‘Oh Lord God, yes!’ (218) Then he entered the mosque and prayed.

The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said to Abū Bakr: ‘Go and kill him.’ Abū Bakr found him standing up, praying. Abū Bakr said to himself: ‘There’s a taboo and a rightful claim associated with prayer. I had better consult the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’ And he went to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who asked him: ‘Did you kill him?’ He replied: ‘No. I saw him standing up, praying, and I saw that there’s a taboo and a rightful claim associated with prayer. But if you want me to kill him, I’ll kill him.’ The Prophet said: ‘You’re not the one for the task. ‘Umar, you go and kill him.’ ‘Umar entered the mosque and he found him prostrating himself. He waited a long time for him [to finish] and then he said: ‘There’s a taboo associated with people prostrating themselves. I had better consult the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and better persons than me have consulted him.’ He came to the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—who asked him: ‘Did you kill him?’ He replied: ‘No. I saw he was prostrating himself and I saw that there’s a taboo and a rightful claim associated with persons prostrating themselves. But if you want me to kill him, I’ll kill him.’ The Prophet said: ‘You’re not the one for

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48 Probably TT IX, p. 74, no. 91; died 216/831.

49 TT XII, p. 241.

50 TT XI, p. 385, no. 746.

51 *Wāfi* XV, p. 23, no. 27; died *circa* 140/757.

the task. Oh °Alī, you go! You're the one for the task, if you find him.' °Alī got up and went inside but he found that he'd already left the mosque. He returned to the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—who asked: 'Did you kill him?' He replied: 'No, I didn't.'

The Prophet said: 'Had you killed him, no two men in my community would ever be in disagreement until the arrival of the Antichrist (al-Dajjāl).'"

A fifth chain of transmission for this *ḥadīth* comes from the report of Jābir b. °Abd Allāh. Abū Bakr b. Abī Shayba and Aḥmad b. Mani°<sup>52</sup> say in their *Musnads* that Yazīd b. Hārūn<sup>53</sup> reported from al-°Awwām b. Ḥawshab<sup>54</sup>—from Ṭalḥa b. Nāfi° Abū Sufyān<sup>55</sup>—from Jābir who said:

"A man walked past the Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and they spoke about him and praised him. The Apostle of God asked—(219) God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Who will kill him?' Abū Bakr replied: 'I will.' He went off and found the man standing up, praying. Abū Bakr returned without having killed him, since he'd seen him in that situation. Then the Apostle of God asked—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Who will kill him?' °Umar replied: 'I will.' He went and found the man standing up, praying, and returned without having killed him. The Apostle of God asked—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'Who will kill him?' °Alī replied: 'I will.' The Prophet said: 'As for you, I don't see that you'll catch him.' °Alī went off and found that the man had left..."

Abū Ya°lā has published it as: "Abū Khaythama reported this to us—from Yazīd b. Hārūn." And according to Muslim the *isnād* is sound. Yazīd b. Hārūn and al-°Awwām b. Ḥawshab are among the authorities cited in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, and Abū Sufyān Ṭalḥa b. Nāfi° is among Muslim's authorities. If the *ḥadīth* only had this one *isnād*, that would be sufficient to establish its certainty and its soundness.

A sixth chain of transmission for this *ḥadīth* comes from the report of the Companion Abū Bakra.<sup>56</sup> The imam Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal says in

52 TT I, p. 84, no. 144; died 244/858.

53 TT VI, p. 450; died 204/819-20

54 TT VIII, p. 163, no. 297; died 148/765.

55 TT V, p. 26, no. 44.

56 *Uṣd* VI, p. 38, no. 5731; died 51-52/671-72.

his *Musnad*<sup>57</sup> that Rawḥ<sup>58</sup> reported from °Uthmān al-Shaḥḥām<sup>59</sup>—from Muslim b. Abī Bakra<sup>60</sup>—from his father [Abū Bakra] that:

“The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—walked past a man who was prostrating himself. The Prophet went off for the prayers and when he finished praying, he returned to the man and he was still prostrating himself. The Prophet then rose—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and asked: ‘Who will kill this fellow?’ A man stood up and laying bare his hand, he unsheathed his sword and swung it about. But then he said: ‘Oh Prophet of God, by my father and mother, how can I kill a man who’s prostrating himself and bears witness that there is no god but God and Muḥammad is His bondsman and His Apostle?’ The Prophet then asked: ‘Who will kill this fellow?’ A man stood up and said: ‘I will.’ Laying bare his arms, he unsheathed his sword and swung it about until his hand was trembling. But then he said: ‘Oh Prophet of God, how can I kill a man who’s prostrating himself and bears witness that there is no god but God and Muḥammad is His bondsman and His Apostle?’

The Prophet then said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘By Him Who holds my soul in His hand, had you killed him, this would have been the first and the last of dissension!’”

(220) The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī says—God be pleased with him: ‘According to Muslim this *isnād* is sound. Moreover, Rawḥ is an authority [cited] in the two *Ṣaḥīḥs*, and °Uthmān al-Shaḥḥām and Ibn Abī Bakra are both authorities cited by Muslim.’—Here end the words we wished to quote from the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī<sup>61</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him!

.....

Now if you reflect on what we’ve quoted from the Qur’ānic verses and the *ḥadīths*, you’ll understand from this the clear truth and the profitable path. And I took the trouble to question ordinary people about this matter, people whose hearts are empty of doubts and whatever would impede the truth from reaching them. I’d ask them: ‘Is our Lord—great is His majesty—able to create a world like this one?’ They’d reply: ‘Who has any hesitation in this matter? Our Lord is able to do anything. His omnipotence is all-effective and nothing whatsoever is impossible for Him.’ Once I asked one of

<sup>57</sup> *Musnad Aḥmad b. Ḥanbal* V, p. 42.

<sup>58</sup> Rawḥ b. °Ubāda: TT III, p. 293, no. 549; died 205/820 or 207/822.

<sup>59</sup> TT VII, p. 160, no. 321.

<sup>60</sup> TT X, p. 123, no. 221; died between 80/700 and 90/708.

<sup>61</sup> Cited from the *Bāhir*; see fn. 33 above.

them: 'Is our Lord able to bring into being a world more excellent than this world?' He replied to me: 'Haven't you heard the words of God the Sublime: "If He wishes, He can remove you and bring a new creation" (35/16, 14/19). And "the new" isn't restricted to being lesser than us. It's possible it could be better than us or equal to us.' By God, I was greatly amazed by his understanding.

And I asked one of the jurists: 'What do you say about the words of Abū Hāmid: "There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is."?' He replied to me: 'The shaykh al-Sha<sup>c</sup>rānī<sup>62</sup> and others have spoken about it.' I said to him: 'I'm asking you what you think about it!' He replied to me: 'What would I have to say about it?' I said: 'Woe unto you! This is an article of faith. What would you reply if someone asked you: "Is our Lord—great is His majesty—able to bring into being a more excellent creation than this one?"?' He said: 'I'd reply: "The things which God is capable of are infinite. He's able to bring into being a creation a thousand degrees better than this one and then one better than that better one, and so on *ad infinitum*."' Then I said: 'Al-Ghazzālī's words: "There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is" contradicts that.' He then understood the meaning of the expression ascribed to Abū Hāmid—God be pleased with him!

Now this is what I experienced with many of the jurists. If I questioned them about the expression of Abū Hāmid, they were filled with a sense of the loftiness of the imam Ḥujjat al-Islām and they were hesitant. But if I changed the wording and stated it as previously in my question to the ordinary people, the jurists would maintain with certainty the universality of divine omnipotence and the infinite nature of God's capabilities. But God knows best!

## (221) SECTION

It seems best to me to cite the words of Abū Hāmid regarding this question—God be pleased with him! After that I'll present other people's views to make the benefit complete. And so I proceed:

Abū Hāmid says—God be pleased with him—in the *Iḥyā'* where he refers to the fruits of putting one's trust in God (*tawwakul*): '...and this means that a person believes with firm conviction devoid of weakness and doubt that if God the Sublime had created all creatures with the intelligence of the most intelligent and the knowledge of the

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<sup>62</sup> See p. 630, fn. 19.



most knowledgeable, and created knowledge for them beyond what their souls can bear, and filled them with wisdom beyond description, and added again the same amount of knowledge, wisdom and intelligence, and then unveiled for them the final outcomes of things and informed them of the secrets of the Celestial Realm and made them familiar with the subtleties of divine benevolence (*lutf*) and the concealed aspects of punishments so that they thereby became aware of good and evil, benefit and harm, and if He then ordered them to regulate the lower world (*mulk*) and the Celestial Realm (*malakūt*) with what He bestowed on them of knowledge and wisdom—all their regulation through cooperation and mutual assistance wouldn't entail an increase regarding what God the Sublime has regulated for creation in the world and in the hereafter by so much as the wing of a gnat or a decrease by so much as the wing of a gnat... No sickness, no fault, no shortcoming and no loss, would be warded off from anyone afflicted by it, nor would health or riches, perfection or benefit, be increased for anyone on whom God had conferred it. Rather if they examined closely everything God had created in the heavens and on earth and took their time looking at it, they wouldn't see any difference in it or any rifts. Everything that God has distributed among His bondsmen in the way of sustenance, time of death, happiness, joy and sorrow, incapacity and power, faith and unbelief, obedience and sin—all of it contains justice and no wrong, pure right and no wickedness. Indeed, it's in the necessary, right order in accordance with what must be, the way it must be, and to the extent it must be. There's nothing in [the realm of] possibility more complete, more excellent and more perfect. If there were and God kept it back despite His omnipotence and didn't bring it about, this would be miserliness that contradicts divine generosity, and injustice that contradicts divine justice. And if He weren't able, He'd be incapable, but incapacity contradicts divinity.

However, all poverty and loss in the world is a decrease (222) in the world but an increase in the hereafter. And in the hereafter every decrease in relation to one person is felicity in relation to someone else. For if there were no night, one wouldn't know the value of the day. If there were no sickness, the healthy wouldn't enjoy sound health. And if there were no Hell, the dwellers in Paradise wouldn't know the value of the life of ease. Likewise, it's no injustice if a human being's spirit is redeemed with an animal's spirit and men have the power to sacrifice animals. According precedence to the perfect over the defective constitutes justice itself. And so the

benefactions of the dwellers in Paradise are intensified by magnifying the punishment of the dwellers in Hell-fire. As long as the deficient hasn't been created, the perfect can't be known. If animals hadn't been created, the nobility of man wouldn't have appeared. Perfection and deficiency appear through relationship [to one another]. Divine generosity and wisdom require the creation of the perfect and the deficient. Just as it's justice to cut off a gangrenous hand to retain the vital spirit because this is to redeem the perfect with the deficient, so it is with the difference of allotments among people in the world and in the hereafter. All of that is justice without unfairness, and right devoid of whim.

Now this is an abounding ocean of immense depth with far-flung shores and agitated by waves. Groups of observers have drowned in it, being unaware that this is an obscure matter which is only understood by those who know. Beyond this ocean lies the secret of the divine decree which causes perplexity in most people, while those to whom it's been revealed are forbidden to divulge its secret. In short, good and evil are divinely decreed and what's been decreed must necessarily happen after having previously been willed by God. No one can reject His ruling and no one can amend His decree. Rather: "Everything great and small is recorded" (54/53) and it will happen in "a known measure" (15/21). What struck you couldn't have missed you, and what missed you couldn't have struck you.<sup>63</sup> Here end the words in the *Iḥyā'* as transmitted by the sayyid al-Samhūdī<sup>64</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—in his work that deals with this question which he entitled *Īdāḥ al-bayān li-man arāda'l-hujja min laysa fī'l-imkān abda' mimmā kān*. And Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī<sup>65</sup> has also transmitted these words in his work on this question which he entitled *Dalālat* (223) *al-burhān 'alā an laysa fī'l-imkān abda' mimmā kān*.

Al-Samhūdī says—God have mercy on him: 'And Abū Ḥāmid expresses himself like this in the *Jawhar al-Qur'ān*<sup>66</sup> and in *al-*

<sup>63</sup> *Iḥyā'* IV, p. 258/*Stufen* E.72 ff., on p. 548 ff.

<sup>64</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXIX; the passage in al-Samhūdī: *Īdāḥ*, p. 68, l. 6 to p. 69, l. -9; he died 911/1506.

<sup>65</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXX; died 885/1480; see especially Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 115 and fn. 65.

<sup>66</sup> On this book cf. Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 50; see also Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 48 and *Jawāhir*, p. 39 bot.

*Ajwiba al-muskita*.<sup>67</sup> These are answers to objections that arose to his book the *Ihyā'* during the lifetime of the author.<sup>68</sup>

I, al-Lamāṭī, would add that he expresses himself in a similar way in his book which he entitled *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*.<sup>69</sup>

.....

The religious scholars—God be pleased with them—are divided into three groups when it comes to this question attributed to Abū Ḥāmid. One group disapproves of it and rejects it, another group explains it, and the third group denies its attribution to Abū Ḥāmid, declaring that his halting-station is far above this question.

The **first group** who oppose Abū Ḥāmid—God have mercy on him—are those in his time and afterwards who recognized the truth [of the matter]. The imam Abū Bakr b. al-ʿArabī<sup>70</sup> says in the passage transmitted by Abū ʿAbd Allāh al-Qurṭubī<sup>71</sup> in the *Sharḥ asmā' allāh al-ḥusnā*:<sup>72</sup> 'Our shaykh Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī uttered a distressing statement which the people of Iraq criticized and, with God as my witness, it well deserved to be criticized. He said: "There is not in God's omnipotence anything more wonderful than this world for its perfection and wisdom. If there were anything more wonderful in the divine omnipotence and He held it back, this would contradict generosity." Ibn al-ʿArabī goes on opposing him until he says: 'Though we're no more than a drop in his ocean [of learning], we'll only refute him with his own words.' Then he says: 'Praise be to Him Who perfected the beneficial characteristics of this shaykh of ours but then turned him away from the clear path!'<sup>73</sup>

And among those who travelled this same road is Abū'l-ʿAbbās Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Munayyir al-Iskandarī al-Mālikī.<sup>74</sup> He composed a treatise on this subject which he entitled *al-Diyā' al-mutalālī fī ta'aqqub al-Ihyā' li'l-Ghazzālī*. He says: 'The question referred to is only treated in accordance with the principles of the philosophers

<sup>67</sup> On this book cf. Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 102, no. 116; see also Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 35 and fn. 14.

<sup>68</sup> *Īdāh*, p. 72, ll. 9 f.; shortened quotation; Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 75, fn. 136.

<sup>69</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, pp. 36 f., especially fn. 16 and 17; on this book cf. Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 23, no. 17.

<sup>70</sup> See p. 315, fn. 195.

<sup>71</sup> See p. 307, fn. 174.

<sup>72</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 98, fn. 8.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. *Īdāh*, p. 66, ll. 11-13.

<sup>74</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXXI; died 683/1284; Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 103, fn. 31, and p. 107.

and the Muʿtazilites.<sup>75</sup> The sayyid al-Samhūdī composed his above-mentioned treatise in opposition to this treatise by way of giving support to Abū Ḥāmid—God have mercy on him—and objecting against Ibn al-Munayyir. What it contains will be presented later—if God is willing!

And Kamāl al-Dīn b. Abī Sharīf<sup>76</sup> says in the *Sharḥ al-Musāyara*—after stating that God the Sublime’s capabilities include what’s more wonderful than this world: ‘Then in certain chapters of the *Ihyāʾ*, such as the chapter dealing with trust in God (*tawakkul*), there occurs what indicates the contrary of this—but God knows best! That results from the confusion of his having based himself on the method of the philosophers. The authorities in the age of the Ḥujjat al-Islām and (224) those after him rejected this, and this rejection by the authorities is transmitted by the ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī in the *Taʾrīkh al-islām*.’<sup>77</sup>

Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī<sup>78</sup> says: ‘Al-Ghazzālī states: “There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than the form of this world. If something more wonderful were possible and God didn’t bring it about, it would be miserliness in contradiction to His generosity or incapacity in contradiction to His omnipotence.” He says: “These are sterile words the likes of which shouldn’t be applied to the Creator. On the other hand, perhaps he wished to glorify the Creator’s works.”

I, al-Lamaʿī, say this is because the true God possesses absolute free will, and wickedness, miserliness and incapacity are impossible for Him. But the words in his previous proof: ‘If there were a more wonderful world than this one and God kept it back despite His ability to create it, it would be miserliness and wickedness’ contradicts this. Abū Ḥāmid himself has already dealt with explaining the impossibility of these realities with regard to God the Sublime in his book entitled the *Iqtisād*<sup>79</sup> which he composed on the subject of doctrine. According to this, if there were a more wonderful world than the present one and God didn’t bring it about, that’s because of His perfect free will and the loftiness of His majesty and power—not because of what he says here, i.e. that it

<sup>75</sup> Muʿtazilites: a rationalistic theological ‘school’ that taught free will, the necessity for God to be just, and the createdness of the Qurʾān. The peak of its development was under the caliph Maʾmūn (d. 218/833); cf. EI s.v.

<sup>76</sup> ‘Ibriziana’, p. 148, CXXII; Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 118 and fn. 85.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. *Idāh*, p. 90, ll. 10-13; see Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 109, fn. 46; al-Dhahabī quoted by Ibn Abī Sharīf.

<sup>78</sup> See p. 145, fn. 95; Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 110, fn. 52, and pp. 111 f.

<sup>79</sup> On this book cf. Bouyges, *Essai*, pp. 33 f., no. 24; and see here p. 808.

would be miserliness, incapacity and wickedness. God is elevated above this by a great elevation! And God have mercy of Ibn al-‘Arabī for his previous words: ‘Though we’re no more than a drop in his ocean [of learning], we’ll only refute him with his own words.’ If you wish to refute what he says with his own words, look at the previously mentioned book the *Iqtisād* and also look at his book *al-Qistās al-mustaqīm*,<sup>80</sup> as well as many passages in the *Ihyā’* where he states the truth which is due unto the Lord—He is sublime! Perhaps we’ll indicate some of this in what’s to come later—if God is willing!

.....

As for the **second group**, they support Abū Hāmid—God the Sublime be pleased with him—and they explain his words in what they believe to be the true manner. The first in this group is Abū Hāmid himself, since he was questioned about this matter in his day and age. This is what he says—God have mercy on him! In *al-Ajwiba al-muskita*<sup>81</sup> he [first] cites the question: ‘What’s the meaning of: There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is, as far as the form of the world, and anything more beautifully ordered and more perfectly fashioned; for if anything more wonderful were possible and God kept it back despite His ability to create it, that would be miserliness which contradicts divine generosity, and if He were unable to do it, that would be incapacity which contradicts divinity—? And how can He be judged incapable regarding something He chose not to create, whereas this wasn’t ascribed to Him before He created the world? Yet it’s said that holding back from bringing forth the world out of non-existence into being is incapacity, as was said in what we already mentioned. So what’s the difference between these two?’

Then he replies: ‘Now that, i.e. delaying the world’s creation before creation<sup>82</sup> and not bringing it forth from non-existence into being, falls under God’s free will. An agent with free will has the choice to act or not to act. But if God does act, it’s only possible for Him to act in accordance (225) with the utmost wisdom’—and so on to the end of his words, which is no help at all as an answer.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that if God has free will before acting, then He has free will at the time of acting, as well as after acting. He is sublime—there is no god but He! Then if free will is the reason for

<sup>80</sup> On this book cf. Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 57, no. 57.

<sup>81</sup> See fn. 67 above.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. *Īdāh*, p. 72, ll. -5 f.; as well as Ormsby, *Theodicy*, pp. 75 f.: *deferral of creation*.

the delay in the existence of the world, it necessarily follows that it's also the reason for the delay in the existence of a more wonderful one and [God's] turning away from it. Therefore his words: 'But if God does act, it's only possible for Him to act in accordance with the utmost wisdom' require that His free will be suspended at the time of acting and that He must act as wisdom demands—God is elevated above that by a great elevation! Thus Abū Ḥāmid should be asked—God the Sublime have mercy on him: 'If the most wonderful is that there should be no delay in the existence of the world, why did God turn away from this?' Undoubtedly, he'll reply: 'He turned away from it to establish His free will.' One can then say to him: 'The same holds true after the action. The most wonderful shouldn't be done in order to establish God the Sublime's free will.' If he says: 'During action He's deprived of it but before action He possesses it', then he must deny the attribute of free will that He's possessed since pre-eternity. But what's established as eternal can't possibly not exist. This is clear, manifest proof (*ḥujja*) against the Ḥujjat al-Islām—God be pleased with him!

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And the shaykh al-Shaʿrānī—God have mercy on him—says in *al-Ajwiba al-marḍiyya ʿan sādatinā al-fuqahāʾ waʾl-ṣūfiyya*:<sup>83</sup> 'Among the things they reproach the imam al-Ghazzālī for are his words: "There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is." Those who reproach him say: "This can be understood as implying incapacity on the part of Divinity." The answer to this is what the shaykh Muḥyī al-Dīn Ibn al-ʿArabī says in the *Futūḥār*: "The words of al-Ghazzālī are extremely accurate. They shouldn't be denied, for there are only two degrees, the degree of eternity (*qidam*) and the degree of contingency (*ḥudūth*). The first degree is for God the Sublime alone, according to the consensus of the people of the religious communities. The second degree is for creation. If God the Sublime were to create whatever He creates, it would never go beyond the degree of contingency. One can't ask: "Is God the Sublime able to create something eternal that's equal to Himself in eternity?"'<sup>84</sup> This is an unclearly defined question which is completely absurd.'—End of the citation.

I, al-Lamāṭī, say this in no way constitutes an answer. There's no connection between it and our question in any manner or circumstance. It would only be appropriate as an answer if al-

<sup>83</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXXIII; al-Shaʿrānī died 973/1565; and cf. Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 119, fn. 90.

<sup>84</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, pp. 103-7 and fn. 32.

Ghazzālī had claimed—God have mercy on him: ‘There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than the eternal.’ The answer is that the contingent never reaches the eternal. As for al-Ghazzālī’s claim within the degrees of contingency and that among existing contingent things it isn’t possible for something contingent to be more wonderful than it is, and the claim of his opponents that it is possible for something more wonderful to exist, otherwise God’s capacities are denied and that would necessitate (226) a shortcoming in divine omnipotence resulting in incapacity—how does this answer address these points? But God the Sublime knows best!

Then al-Shaʿrānī<sup>85</sup> says by way of transmitting another answer: ‘The shaykh ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Jīlī<sup>86</sup> replied: “Every event in existence was preceded by eternal knowledge and it isn’t correct that it rises above its station in eternal knowledge, nor that it descends below it. Thus the words of the imam are correct: ‘There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is.’”’

I, al-Lamāʿī, say this isn’t an answer either because we don’t concede that no event in existence rises above its station in God’s knowledge or descends below it. And so this doesn’t of necessity require that it’s impossible for there to be anything more wonderful than what is. Indeed, the answer would only be correct if al-Ghazzālī had said: ‘It is not in possibility for a contingent thing to rise above its station in God’s knowledge or to descend below it.’ But God the Sublime knows best!

And al-Shaʿrānī says by way of transmitting another answer: ‘The shaykh Muḥammad al-Maghribī al-Shādhilī<sup>87</sup> who was Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī’s shaykh on the spiritual path—God have mercy on him—replied: “The following is the meaning of al-Ghazzālī’s words: ‘There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than this world as far as the wisdom our mind judges with—by contrast with what God the Sublime alone possesses in His knowledge, His perception and His “most-wonderfulness” which is exclusive to Him—He is exalted! For that’s more perfect and more wonderfully excellent than this world He has displayed for us. If a deficiency were to enter into this world, it would then extend to its Creator. God the Sublime is elevated above that by a great elevation! The people of all the religious communities are in agreement that only what’s perfect issues from the perfect. God the Sublime has said: (227) “We have

<sup>85</sup> On him cf. Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 105, ftn. 36, and pp. 112, 114.

<sup>86</sup> Author of the famous *al-Insān al-kāmil*; died 832/1428; see Massri, *Göttliche Vollkommenheit*, pp. 11 f.

<sup>87</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 118 and ftn. 83; cf. also Sartain, *Suyūṭī* I, pp. 35 f.

built the heavens with hands and We extend it wide. And We have spread out the earth. Oh what excellent levellers!” (51/47-48). And it’s known that indebtedness and laudation are only occasioned by what has perfect qualities. So how would God the Sublime confer benefits and be lauded by His creatures for something less than excellent (*maḥḍūl*)?””

I, al-Lamaṭī, say that if the text of these words isn’t corrupt, this is no answer either. First of all, it contradicts itself because the beginning requires denying that anything more wonderful is possible as far as our minds are concerned only, whereas it’s established with regard to God’s knowledge—He is exalted! The end requires denying it unrestrictedly. If the possibility of a more wonderful world is established, this existing one is flawed by comparison with it and the deficiency will extend to its Creator—He is exalted! Therefore we choose what the first part of the answer requires and we don’t accept the final part of the answer. Nor do we concede the necessity of God possessing deficiency—He is sublime! For the presence of deficiency in what’s been made doesn’t necessitate deficiency in the Maker, as is perfectly clear. Otherwise, everything contingent is deficient because of its need and its lack of its Creator. So if the deficiency of an action extended to the agent, it would also necessarily imply the impossibility of the existence of the most wonderful because of its deficiency due to contingency.

Secondly, the consensus that he relies on isn’t something one can base oneself on in this case because the question concerns capacity (*qudra*) which is one of the factors that allows the occurrence of an action and, as is obvious, this can’t be established by consensus.

And thirdly, the consensus that constitutes proof and that one may resort to is specifically the consensus of this honored and noble religious community. The consensus of any of the other religious communities is of no consequence. Now this honored community maintains that its Lord possesses free will and that He does what He wants in His sovereignty and decides as He wishes. God is sublime—there is no god but He! But God knows it isn’t my intention to oppose our lords, the religious scholars—God be pleased with them, one and all! My purpose is to clarify the truth and make it manifest, and nothing else. God the Sublime knows best!

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And the imam Abū’l-Baqā’ Muḥammad al-Bakrī al-Shāfi<sup>c</sup>88 replied by saying: ‘The answer to this is that creating a world more

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88 Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 113 and fn. 66; pp. 117 f.



wonderful than this one is impossible because the Book doesn't mention it, nor does the clarifying Sunna from God the Sublime. If it were possible, the Book would have mentioned it. God the Sublime has said: "We have neglected nothing in the Book" (6/38). Nor does the Sunna mention it. If it were (228) in the Sunna, the religious scholars would have noted it and transmitted it to us. Thus it's known to be impossible and there's no deficiency in God's omnipotence.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, say that this is a problem from several viewpoints. Firstly, the Book and the Sunna do speak about the subject. This was dealt with at the beginning of the present discussion which one may consult. Secondly, the Book and the Sunna are used to draw conclusions in matters of transmitted religious science where reason doesn't play a role. But when it comes to pure judgements of reason, which are said to be the essence of reason, such as knowledge of the necessity of necessary things, the possibility of possible things and the impossibility of impossible things—these are self-evident matters that have no need of proof from the transmitted religious sciences. But God the Sublime knows best! And there's no doubt that our question has to do with the possibility of possible things and is self-evident without any need of proof. Thirdly, what he's said is opposed by every form of *a priori* knowledge, like our knowledge that four is an even number and half of eight, and that one is half of two. Now they say knowledge like this isn't presented in the Book and in the Sunna and so it should be impossible because whatever isn't in the Book and isn't in the Sunna is impossible on the basis of his answer. But God knows best!

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And Badr al-Dīn al-Zarkashī<sup>89</sup> answers—God the Sublime have mercy on him:<sup>90</sup> 'His words: "There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is" refer to the perception of bright minds, not to the world of the secret which is concealed, perfect and absolute, whose rules have no end, whose wonders can't be counted, and whose marvels are beyond calculation. Thus what he means by: "There is not in possibility" is according to what minds require, not according to what is contained in God's Unseen (*ghayb allāh*). That's why God the Sublime has said: "He creates what you do not know" (16/8). And the judgement of a knower of God (*ʿārif*) is commensurate with his perception, not commensurate with the set rules of his Lord—He is sublime! For the Lord—He is exalted—

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<sup>89</sup> See p. 145, ftn. 95.

<sup>90</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 110 and ftn. 52; pp. 111 f.

encompasses (229) everything, whereas an individual doesn't encompass a single one of His subcategories in all its aspects. And every subcategory possesses numerous rules, some of which God has made known to certain of His bondsmen and others which belong to Himself.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, maintain that this contains problems. Bright minds, from the outset of their speculation, perceive that a more wonderful existence is possible. Nor is thought and reflection required concerning it because of what was previously mentioned about this being based on knowledge of the possibility of possible things that are said to constitute the essence of reason. As for his words: 'And the judgement of a knower of God is commensurate with his perception', I would say that this concerns what's very subtle and concealed from most minds. Regarding what's apparent, given and self-evident, there's no difference in that between a knower of God and anyone else. Whoever agrees with it, is correct. Whoever doesn't, isn't correct.

And I asked a layman about this question and he said: 'Isn't divine omnipotence valid with regard to every possible thing one can imagine?' I replied: 'Yes, it is.' He asked: 'And isn't its being limited to some possibilities and not to others a shortcoming and an incapacity?' I replied: 'Yes, it is.' He said: 'And isn't incapacity with regard to the Creator—He is sublime—an impossibility?' I replied: 'Yes, it is.' Then he said: 'The matter is evident. What aspect isn't perfectly clear?'

And I questioned another layman about it and he replied: 'Doesn't the author of the *Ṣuḡhrā* say: "Thus it's inconceivable that God the Sublime can't do something that's possible." But God knows best!'<sup>91</sup>

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And the shaykh Sayyidī Aḥmad Zarrūq—God be pleased with him—in the *Sharḥ Qawā'id al-'aqā'id*,<sup>92</sup> his commentary on the *Qawā'id* of the imam Ḥujjat al-Islām Abū Ḥāmid—God be pleased with him—gives an answer to the latter's words: 'There is no existing being except for God that hasn't come to be through God's action and hasn't issued forth from His justice in the most excellent, the most perfect, the most complete and the most just of forms.' The shaykh Zarrūq says—God be pleased with him: 'That is to say, everything that has emerged through God's omnipotence and has been specified by His will and perfected through His divine

<sup>91</sup> See also al-Bīghūrī, the *Hāshiya*, pp. 36 f.

<sup>92</sup> 'Ibriziana', p. 148, CXXIV; Zarrūq died 899/1493; see Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 113 and fn. 70.

knowledge can't be deficient in its being because of the perfection of the qualities through which it came into being. It's an effect of their effects. To characterize it as deficient would necessarily entail characterizing them, i.e. the qualities referred to, as being restricted and defective. In this way judging something to be bad or good through reason is in its proper place, and judging it through customary practice is in its proper place, and judging it through the revealed law is in its proper place, because what al-Ghazzālī says is in accordance with wisdom and the manifestation of its connections in connection with us. And what he says here is the sense of what's been imputed to him because of his words: "There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is." Al-Ghazzālī means: "Once whatever has been and (230) will be through eternity has occurred in the spatial dimension, there's nothing more wonderful than it because divine knowledge has perfected it, and there's no deficiency in its perfection, and the divine will has specified it, and there's no deficiency in its specifying, and divine omnipotence has brought it forth, and there's no deficiency in its bringing forth. The emergence of this thing is in the most wonderful and the most perfect of forms."

This is how these words of al-Ghazzālī are to be understood, for if they aren't understood like this, what he says will entail a shortcoming in divine omnipotence and the other qualities which accompany it. And that's a falsehood not even a fool would utter, much less an intelligent person. But God alone confers success!<sup>93</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, say that the difficulties with this are clear. If deficiency in an effect necessarily entailed deficiency in what produced the effect and the qualities of the latter, it would be impossible for any being to be other than the most wonderful. The existence of the most wonderful would be necessary. And this would lead to causation (*ta'līl*) and denial of free will. What's correct is that this necessity is inadmissible and the most wonderful as well as what isn't the most wonderful are possible. Divine free will is comprehensive, God's omnipotence is universal and there's no limit to the things it has authority over. This is if he means necessity in its real sense. If he means it in accordance with our minds and what wisdom requires in our view and opinion, this has previously been discussed where what al-Zarkashī says is dealt with. But God knows best!

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<sup>93</sup> From *Sharḥ 'Aqīdat al-Ghazzālī*, pp. 98-101; the wording is greatly altered, probably due to errors in the printed edition; cf. Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 96; cited in *Īdāh*, p. 81, ll. -7 ff.; and see Introduction to *Fayṣal al-tafrīqa*, p. 33.

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And Burhān al-Dīn b. Abī Sharīf<sup>94</sup> gives an answer—and he is the brother of the previously mentioned imam in the first group. He was younger than him and lived a long time after him. The text of what he says is: ‘In the words of Ḥujjat al-Islām there’s nothing imposed as an obligation [on God] and no prohibition on divine omnipotence and there’s no denying that God the Sublime’s omnipotence can create a world other than this one. Rather He is able to bring forth an infinite number of worlds. But due to the involvement of eternal knowledge and the occurrence of His free will and His volition in creating it, it has been characterized as the most wonderful because of its indicating what His attributes demand. And al-Ghazzālī’s words: “There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is” mean that among the possibilities which divine omnipotence attached itself to and which were preceded in pre-eternity by divine knowledge and will, there’s nothing more wonderful than what exists—for the reason we have presented.’

I, al-Lamaʿī, say this contains problems from two points of view. Firstly, he makes the priority of divine knowledge and will into a proof that what exists is the most wonderful. But it doesn’t prove this. On the contrary, it only proves that what exists exists out of divine knowledge and will. Whether it’s the most wonderful or not is a broader question that remains to be decided. Secondly, you certainly understand that (231) what’s most wonderful has no limit to its individual cases because it’s an object of divine omnipotence, and there are innumerable objects of divine omnipotence. If the most wonderful has no end to it, then it’s to be assumed that the eternal qualities are attached to the existence of any individual case of it, and there remains in the domain of the possible an infinite number of its individuals. But the one providing an answer—God be pleased with him—thought of the most wonderful as something partial, something personal, that doesn’t contain multiplicity. Then if it’s assumed that divine knowledge and will are attached to its existence, any other than it would be impossible. Otherwise, knowledge would be ignorance. But since the most wonderful is total and without an end to its individual cases, it wouldn’t follow from the existence of one case that any other case was excluded from the domain of possibility. But God knows best!

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94 Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 118 and fn. 87.

And the shaykh Abū'l-Mawāhib al-Tūnisī<sup>95</sup>—God have mercy on him—gave an answer, the text of which is: 'His words: "There is not in possibility anything more wonderful than what is" we take to mean what's possible for divine wisdom, not what's possible for Lordly omnipotence. This is what's befitting with regard to the words of Ḥujjat al-Islām.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, say I don't concede that this isn't possible for divine wisdom. If the matters over which divine omnipotence has authority have no limit to them, divine wisdom has no limit to it either. That's because it adheres to the matters over which divine knowledge has authority and the latter have no limit to them. Thus it's absolutely imperative that divine wisdom have no limit to it. Who would be so audacious toward God the Sublime's wisdom as to say it's limited and restricted. A more extensive explanation will be presented on divine wisdom and what Abū Ḥāmid himself—God be pleased with him—applies it to in his words—if God the Sublime is willing! But God knows best!

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And the Shaykh al-Islām Zakariyyā<sup>96</sup> al-Anṣārī al-Shāfi'ī<sup>96</sup>—God be pleased with him—gives an answer in these words: 'No one is permitted to ascribe to Abū Ḥāmid the view that God the Sublime is incapable (232) of creating a world that's more wonderful than this one. This understanding [of his words] has arisen from the mistaken idea that the meaning of "possibility (*imkān*)" in his statement is divine omnipotence, i.e. there isn't in divine omnipotence anything more wonderful than what is. But this isn't the sense. Rather it has its familiar meaning opposite to impossibility and to necessity but with the omission of the noun in construct, or we take it in the meaning of the possible as though the verbal noun (*maṣḍar*) here designates the active participle (*ism al-fā'il*).<sup>97</sup> And the sense of Ḥujjat al-Islām's expression is that there isn't on the side of possibility or in the possible anything more wonderful than what divine omnipotence is connected with, and that's the truth because existence is better than non-existence. The sense of the expression of the Mu'tazilites is that they declared that God the Sublime is unable to create anything more wonderful than what He fashions in each

<sup>95</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 149, CXXV; al-Tūnisī was still alive in 806/1406; see Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 112 and fn. 64; pp. 114 f.

<sup>96</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 149, CXXVI; died 926/1520; see Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 119 and fn. 88.

<sup>97</sup> I.e. we understand 'possibility (*imkān*)' in the sense of 'possible (*mumkin*)'.

individual. But this is false in the view of Ḥujjat al-Islām and all the adherents of the Sunna because it's founded on the idea that God the Sublime must do what's most appropriate (*al-aṣḥaḥ*) and this is a false principle.'

And he goes on to say: 'It's known that Ḥujjat al-Islām didn't mean divine omnipotence when he said "possibility (*imkān*)". If he'd meant that, his words would be attributable to the Mu'tazilites.' And he says: 'For this reason it's known that the said phrase isn't in need of being construed [differently], nor is it necessary to say it was interpolated in his text or that it's a mistake on his part or other such statements which are unworthy of his station. On the contrary, what he says is true and must be believed in the way I've related. Now let the subject rest in this halting-station, for here is a place where feet may slip.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, say it's clear what this contains and what he relies on to ward off from Ḥujjat al-Islām [the charge of] the inconceivable by construing 'possibility' as the opposite to necessity, but impossibility is not ward off, and so the difficulty still remains. For the meaning then is: There's nothing on the side of possibility or in the possible more wonderful than what is and thus the postulated 'more wonderful' must be on the side of impossibility or in the impossible. But its being on the side of impossibility is false because it's possible, and what's possible isn't impossible.

Moreover, if it were on the side of impossibility, divine omnipotence wouldn't be connected with it. This would be equivalent to someone saying: 'God is unable to create the postulated more wonderful because if the more wonderful is on the side of impossibility, then divine omnipotence can't create it.' So the inconceivable must be construed as possibility in the meaning of divine omnipotence or in its known meaning opposite to necessity and impossibility. This is evident. But God knows best!

As for his words: 'And the sense of Ḥujjat al-Islām's expression is that there isn't on the side of possibility or in the possible anything more wonderful than what divine omnipotence is connected with, and that's the truth because existence is better than non-existence'—this doesn't prove the claim in question because the claim isn't that non-existence is better than existence so that denying this—which is what the words of Ḥujjat al-Islām do—is the truth. On the contrary, the claim is that the postulated more wonderful is on the side of possibility. That's the truth and to deny this—which is what the words of Ḥujjat al-Islām do—isn't the truth. (233) But God knows best!

As for his words: 'The sense of the expression of the Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites is that they declared that God the Sublime is unable to create anything more wonderful'—I say that this as well is what follows from Ḥujjat al-Islām's words—God be pleased with him—according to the way you've interpreted them, oh provider of an answer—God be pleased with you! For if the more wonderful isn't on the side of possibility and it must be on the side of impossibility, it certainly follows that divine omnipotence isn't connected with the impossible. And so the inevitable problem is there. But God knows best!

As for his words: 'On the contrary, what he says is true and must be believed in the way I've related'—I say God forbid anyone should believe that if the more wonderful existed as well as the divine capacity to bring it about and yet God the Sublime didn't do so, this would be miserliness. Here is the essence of providing appropriateness and the most appropriate (*ri'āyat al-ṣalāh wa'l-aṣlah*) which is the essence of the Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites' doctrine. What one must believe, however, is that God the Sublime acts with free will: 'He is not questioned about what He does' (21/23). 'The Lord creates whatever He wishes and He chooses' (28/68). 'And He creates what you do not know' (16/8). 'And they do not comprehend Him in knowledge' (20/110).

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And the ḥāfiẓ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī<sup>98</sup>—God be pleased with him and give us profit through him, amen—is one of the supporters of Ḥujjat al-Islām. The sense of what he says in his book that he composed on this question and entitled *Tashyīd al-arkān li-mas'alat laysa fī'l-imkān abda' mim mā kān* is as follows: 'The people come to a halt with regard to this and say: "It doesn't conform to the principles of the followers of the Sunna. Rather it conforms to the principles of the Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites, for how can it be a contradiction to divine justice in the view of the followers of the Sunna while doing what's most appropriate, in their view, comes from His goodness. The Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites, on the other hand, oblige God to act justly, basing themselves on the good and the bad as discerned by reason.'" He goes on: 'I don't doubt that the matter, as they say, is difficult to understand. I halted over the matter for some days until God bestowed on me an understanding of it after my beseeching Him and my displaying humility and need. He inspired me regarding it—praise be to Him—to the effect that Ḥujjat al-Islām—God be pleased with him—wished to present a proof in the manner of both ways of

<sup>98</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 149, CXXVII; Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 118 and fn. 84.

thinking so that his claim for the impossibility [of a more wonderful world] would be accomplished in accordance with the two ways of thinking together. It's as if he says: "Both groups agree it's inconceivable." As for the way of thinking of the followers of the Sunna, God's holding back the more wonderful world would contradict His goodness and this is what's designated as divine generosity. As for the way of thinking of the Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites, His holding back in their view is injustice that contradicts divine justice. So he brought (234) forth a sentence of each group and it wasn't his intention to formulate a single doctrine with the two sentences.'<sup>99</sup>

I, al-Lama<sup>t</sup>ī, say that if Ḥujjat al-Islām had expressed himself like that, he'd be close to the real situation but he said: 'If God held back what's more wonderful while having the ability to do it, this would be miserliness that contradicts generosity.' The followers of the Sunna—God be pleased with them—elevate their Lord above the quality of miserliness. So it's clear that the first formulation doesn't correspond to the doctrine of the followers of the Sunna—God be pleased with them!

Sharaf al-Dīn b. al-Tilimsānī<sup>100</sup> says in the *Sharḥ al-Luma<sup>c</sup>* after presenting the doctrine of the Baghdad Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites regarding the necessity of providing what's most appropriate (*al-aṣḥāḥ*): 'This group took its teachings from the philosophers, namely that God the Sublime is generous and that whatever occurs in existence is the utmost of what's possible and if it didn't occur, God wouldn't be generous.'

And Ibn al-Humām<sup>101</sup> says in the *Musāyara* that the Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites maintain: 'Omitting to provide the most appropriate is miserliness above which one must necessarily elevate the Creator, and thus it's necessary that only what's most appropriate occurs. And just as the second part derives from the principles of the Mu<sup>c</sup>tazilites, so does the first part. But God the Sublime knows best!'

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And the most famous *sharīf* and the greatest *ḥadīth* scholar, our lord the sayyid al-Samhūdī—God be pleased with him and give us profit through him—presents an answer in his treatise referred to above. In the treatise he expatiates at length and has written thirty-three pages in a compressed script. And he's one of the supporters of

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<sup>99</sup> From: 'The people come to a halt with regard to this...' corresponds to *Īdāh*, p. 84, ll. 8-17.

<sup>100</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 149, CXXVIII; died 658/1260; see Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 103 and fn. 30; Kaḥḥāla, *Mu<sup>c</sup>jam* VI, p. 133.

<sup>101</sup> Unidentified.



Ḥujjat al-Islām—God be pleased with him! In his treatise he's concerned to refute the treatise of Nāṣir al-Dīn b. al-Munayyir—God the Sublime have mercy on him—which was referred to previously. Now I've thoroughly examined the sayyid al-Samhūdī's treatise and bestowed on it the fairness, reflection and unhurried deliberation it deserves, and I find that it revolves around three points. The first is a circular argument (*al-muṣāḍara 'an al-maṭlūb=petitio principii*).<sup>102</sup> Secondly, the error he's engaged in with respect (235) to rationally construed good and bad, which is the worst of the specious arguments in his treatise. And thirdly, his lack of properly understanding much of what Ibn al-Munayyir says.

Let's consider the explanation of these three points and the elucidation of what they involve so that after this a reader of the treatise will find it's insignificant and won't consider what it says to be important. And so we say as far as **the first point**, the sayyid al-Samhūdī states—God be pleased with him: 'Know that Ḥujjat al-Islām—God be pleased with him—most certainly didn't mean by necessity—in his words about the necessary order (*al-tartīb al-wājib*)—necessity inherent in God's nature (*al-wujūb al-dhātī*) which contradicts God's free will, as the erroneous philosophers maintain. Nor did he mean necessity upon God the Sublime because of reason, as is reported about the Mu'tazilites who cling to the shirt-tails of the philosophers regarding the doctrine. Rather he meant that this is the appointed order that must inevitably occur, as he advocates in his words at the end of the said passage of the *Iḥyā'*. What's foreordained becomes what must necessarily be after a prior act of the divine will. Thus it's the prior act of the divine will that causes it to happen.'<sup>103</sup>

And he goes on to say: 'The most excellent and most perfect must necessarily happen because of the prior act of God's decision, His decree, His will that carries it out, and His wisdom that requires it. Necessity in this sense is necessity by means of free will because it arises from what He knows in pre-eternity, that can't fail to occur, and from His will that must inevitably be carried out. It's impossible for it to be opposed because of the perfection of the will that implements it, the divine omnipotence that follows upon it, and the all-effective wisdom that requires that things be put in their place.'<sup>104</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Cf. Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 204.

<sup>103</sup> *Īdāh*, p. 74, ll. 1-5.

<sup>104</sup> *Īdāh*, p. 74, ll. 11-15.

I, al-Lamaṭī, say the following with regard to his words: ‘Rather he meant that this is the appointed order that must inevitably occur.’ If he means by way of reason, this is the doctrine of the Muʿtazilites which he rejects. If he means that its occurrence is necessarily inevitable because the divine will has willed it in pre-eternity and because of divine knowledge, this is conceded but it’s a circular argument. For he’s presented no proof that what’s necessary because of the connection of God’s knowledge to it and of His will is the most wonderful and most perfect and that nothing else remains in the realm of possibility. In short, if he presents provision of appropriateness (*riʿāyat al-ṣalāh*) as proof for the necessity of the existence of the most wonderful and most perfect, this is nothing else but the doctrine of the Muʿtazilites. If he presents God’s knowledge and will in pre-eternity as proof, this is a circular argument (*muṣādarat al-maṭlūb*) as is perfectly clear. But God the Sublime knows best!

As for his words: ‘Thus it’s the prior act of the divine will that causes it to happen’, if this is meant to describe the most wonderful, it’s a circular argument (*muṣāḍara*). If this is meant to describe what actually is with the possibility that there could be something more wonderful, (236) though there isn’t, this as well is conceded, yet it’s of no use to you at all [in what you’re inferring]. But God the Sublime knows best!

Then when it comes to his relying—for the necessity of the existence of the most perfect and most wonderful—on divine wisdom requiring this because it requires that things be put in their place, what one must say against it is: ‘What do you mean by wisdom?’ Abū Ḥāmid—God be pleased with him—says in the *Maqāṣid al-falāsifa*:<sup>105</sup> ‘The First—He is exalted—is wise because “wisdom” is applied to two things. Firstly, to knowledge which is conceiving of things in terms of their real quiddity and their real definition and believing in them [as being this way] with pure, true certainty. The second is wisdom in action such that the action is ordered and masterfully carried out, combining all the beauty and perfection it has need of.’

Al-Ghazzālī then proceeds to explain God’s knowledge—He is exalted—up to where he says: ‘As for His actions, they’re with the utmost mastery since: “He gave everything its creation and then He guided it” (20/50), and He bestowed on it everything necessary to it and everything it needs, even if it isn’t necessary in the extreme, and

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105 See fn. 69 above.

bestowed on it everything of beauty and perfection, even if it isn't needed—like arching eyebrows and a concave instep for both feet and the beard's growth to cover aging of the skin in old age, and other such subtle niceties beyond calculation in animals, plants, and all the parts of the world.'—End of citation.

So if by wisdom you mean the connection of knowledge to things, which is the first kind, then it's clear that, as far as reason is concerned, wisdom doesn't require the existence of the most wonderful since knowledge is necessarily connected to everything. If you mean wisdom in the second sense, this doesn't help you either because it consists of the productive connection of divine omnipotence so that wisdom causes it not to produce exclusively the most wonderful and most perfect. For an action to be masterfully done and perfect doesn't require restricting the most wonderful to it [exclusively] and the absence of all its other individual cases from the domain of possibility.

In short, wisdom doesn't prove what they've said, because it either consists of the connection of knowledge or it consists of the connection of omnipotence, and neither of these requires the necessity of the existence of the most wonderful. What it requires by way of a false requirement is one of two things: either attributing causation [to God's action] and the denial of His free will, as the cursed philosophers teach, or that miserliness and injustice aren't inherent in God, as the Mu'tazilites maintain. But God the Sublime knows best!

And besides all this, the most wonderful and most perfect is universal with no limit to its cases, as was previously stated. Now if wisdom requires the existence of one of its individuals, what proof is there of its restriction (237) and the impossibility of other [most wonderful] individuals? It's as if he mistakenly imagines—God be pleased with him—that the most wonderful and most perfect is personal and partial. So that if wisdom required it to exist, anything else would be impossible because of the divine knowledge and the wisdom of its existence. But this is false because if the most wonderful were personal and partial without multiplicity, there would necessarily have to be an end to the divine capacities. Moreover, if we assert that beyond this existing world there's no more wonderful world possible and that all that remains in the realm of possibility is one that's more deficient than it, then we're absolutely obliged to say that the capacities of the Lord—He is exalted—for what's the most wonderful and most perfect are limited to this existing world. And we're absolutely obliged to say that

omnipotence isn't under the constraint of appropriateness (*al-ta'alluq al-ṣulūhī*) to create a world which is more wonderful than this one, and that's what we've sought [to show]. This much is sufficient for what concerns the first point. When the door of speculative theology is opened for an intelligent man, he knows how one enters and how one comes forth. But God the Sublime knows best!

As for **the second point**, the sayyid al-Samhūdī says—God be pleased with him: 'Reason's judging something good or bad on the basis of perceiving characteristics of perfection and deficiency, such as the good being knowledge and justice, whereas the bad is ignorance and injustice, is something agreed upon between us and the Mu'tazilites, as we'll make clear—if God the Sublime is willing!'<sup>106</sup> He's referring to what he presents after this in his words of Section Two. 'Opponents imagine that Ḥujjat al-Islām builds his argumentation for his claim on the principle of good and bad established by reason in the teachings of the Mu'tazilites, which is outside the principles of the people of the Sunna and the Community. However, this is a fantasy refuted for two reasons.

The first is what we've already said about the independence of reason in conformity with its perception of what's based on the characteristic of perfection, such as knowledge and justice being good, and what's based on the characteristic of deficiency, such as ignorance and injustice being bad, and the perception of the existence of God's divinity<sup>107</sup>—He is mighty and glorious—and the perception of His elevation above defects<sup>108</sup> and the absence of what causes them. This is why they've agreed on the impossibility of the non-occurrence of what God's pre-eternal knowledge knew would occur. They all conceded its necessity, arguing that God the Sublime is elevated above the ignorance that would result if non-occurrence were the case. Nor is this a cause for fear among those well versed in the books dealing with the *uṣūl* [*al-fiqh*] and what gives rise to dispute within them. Rather dispute arises concerning reason's independence to perceive the good and the bad in God the Sublime's ordering.<sup>109</sup> The Mu'tazilites maintain that it can, whereas the Ash'arites<sup>110</sup> deny it.

<sup>106</sup> *Īdāh*, p. 77, ll. 6-8.

<sup>107</sup> *Īdāh*, p. 78, l. 1 has *al-ūlā*; our text *al-ulūhiyya*.

<sup>108</sup> *Īdāh*, p. 78, l. 1 has *al-thāniya*; our text *tanzīh*.

<sup>109</sup> From: 'Opponents imagine...'=*Īdāh*, p. 77, l. -4 to p. 78, l. 8.

<sup>110</sup> The theological adversaries of the Mu'tazilites. 'Alī b. Ismā'īl al-Ash'arī (d. 324/935) rejected reason's independence in matters of religion and relied instead

Next he builds on this that the existence of what isn't most wonderful is a defect. He explains its being a defect, firstly because by its existence being contrary to what wisdom demands, it's a defect in the sight of reason. Secondly, because (238) it contradicts God's pre-eternal knowledge and what's a contradiction to previous knowledge is ignorance and ignorance is a defect and a defect is bad in the sight of reason. In other words, what Ḥujjat al-Islām says—God be pleased with him—is based upon a good established by reason and agreed upon between us and the Muʿtazilites. The person who opposes it thinks it's based on judging the Muʿtazilites to be good [generally]. However, such isn't the case because this is good established by reason in the sense of the characteristic of perfection and defect which is established by reason and agreed upon, as determined in the *uṣūl* [*al-fiqh*].'

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The above is a resumé of his words in that section—God the Sublime have mercy on him! I, al-Lamaʿī, maintain it must be rejected. And the first thing we say about it is that we'll refute it with the words of Abū Ḥāmid himself. He's made this clear—God be pleased with him—in his book *al-Iqtiṣād al-sanī fi'l-iʿtiqād al-sunnī*,<sup>111</sup> as well as in his book *al-Mustasfā fi'l-uṣūl*<sup>112</sup> which belongs to the last of his compositions. This he indicates in the introduction to the *Mustasfā*, the wording in the *Mustasfā* being: 'They, i.e. the Muʿtazilites, advance as an argument and maintain: "We know absolutely that someone for whom truthfulness and lying are on a par [in all other respects] will prefer truthfulness and be inclined to it by his nature—if he's endowed with reason—and this is only because of its being good. We also know that if a mighty ruler, who wields power over several climes, should see a weak person close to death, he would be inclined to rescue him, even if he didn't believe in the foundation of religion and expect a reward, or didn't expect some remuneration or gratitude. Indeed, those endowed with reason judge it to be admirable perseverance if someone who's coerced to tell a lie or to divulge a secret and to break a promise acts in contradiction to the purpose of the one coercing him. In short, no one endowed with reason rejects approving of virtuous character traits and the bestowal of benefactions."

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on Qurʾānic statements, even when these seemed to portray God in anthropomorphic terms. Cf. EI, s.n. al-Ashʿarī.

<sup>111</sup> See fn. 79 above.

<sup>112</sup> Bouyges, *Essai*, p. 73, no. 59.

The answer [to this] is that we don't deny the widespread occurrence of these cases among the people and their existence is something praiseworthy and celebrated. But the basis for it is either that one religiously follows the legal prescriptions or follows [one's personal] goals. Now this we deny with regard to God the Sublime because He has no goals. And as for the people applying these words to what concerns their dealings with one another, this derives from their goals but their goals may be extremely subtle and hidden. Only those familiar with reality are aware of them. We want to draw attention to the occasions for error in this, and there are three occasions when the imagination commits an error.'

Al-Ghazzālī then expatiates at length on this and presents a page of large format in order to explain these occasions for error. One must study his words on this subject carefully, for they're extremely accurate and the height of success. He then builds on this to the effect that everything they find to be bad, i.e. the Mu'tazilites, in the way of lying, unbelief, ignorance, injustice, and so on, which are held to be bad by convention and customary usage, are included among these three errors. He continues until at the end of his words he states: 'Thus we say (239) that we don't deny that "the people of customary usage" find lying and injustice among themselves to be bad. On the other hand, we are dealing here with good and bad with relation to God the Sublime. Someone who decides on this takes as his basis analogy from the visible to the transcendental world (*qiyās al-ghā'ib 'alā'l-shāhid*).<sup>113</sup> How can he draw such an analogy? If a lord left his male servants to cavort with his handmaidens, and they did indecent things, and he was aware of it and could stop it, this would be bad on his part. But God does this with his bondsmen and it's not bad on His part. And their saying that He leaves them to exercise restraint by themselves so they'll merit the reward is nonsense because He knows they won't restrain themselves. So let Him stop them by force, for how many a person has been hindered from indecent acts because of incapacity and impotence. And this is better than empowering them in the knowledge that they won't restrain themselves.'

This is what he says in the *Mustaṣfā* and his way of expressing it in the *Iqtiṣād* is more lengthy and complete. Moreover, the eminent Ash'arites had already said the same thing before him, men such as the *qāḍī* Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī, whose words are cited in the

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113 Cf. van Ess, *Īcī*, pp. 383 ff.

*Burhān*,<sup>114</sup> and Imām al-Ḥaramayn in the *Burhān*, and Abū'l-Ḥasan al-Abyārī,<sup>115</sup> the commentator on the *Burhān*, and others as well.

If you've heard this, you know that 'the good and the bad agreed upon between us and the Mu'tazilites' are what's customary and current in the talk and conversations of the people and that the Mu'tazilites wished to compare God the Sublime in His actions and His ordinances with His creatures and their customary practices—He is elevated above this by a great elevation! And this is a corrupt comparison, as al-Ghazzālī explains—God be pleased with him! In this case, good and bad in the sense of harmony and incompatibility with nature, and in the sense of the characteristics of perfection and defect, as agreed upon, must be attributed to customary practice and convention, and not to the True—He is sublime—in His stipulations and His actions, as the sayyid al-Samhūdī mistakenly does—God be pleased with him! And so his statement: 'What Ḥujjat al-Islām says is based on a good which is agreed upon' isn't true. Rather it's based on the good of the Mu'tazilites who make use of analogy from the visible to the transcendental world.

As for his words: 'Nor is this a cause for fear among those well versed in the books dealing with the *uṣūl* [*al-fiqh*], etc.', I say that it's escaped you, oh venerable sayyid—God be pleased with you and give us benefit through you—whereas the scholars of jurisprudence (Uṣūliyyūn) have pointed it out, that good and bad are current in the rules of human beings but human beings differ with regard to the ordinances of God the Sublime. (240) And the Mu'tazilites draw an analogy from the rules of human beings to God the Sublime's ordinances, but the followers of the Sunna—God be pleased with them—oppose them and say: 'One can't draw an analogy from the visible to the transcendental world.'

This was the case with the early scholars of jurisprudence so that it became known that there isn't agreement between us and the Mu'tazilites about good and bad. The later juridical scholars came and clarified the cause of disagreement, declaring: 'The thing from which the analogy is drawn (*al-maqīs* '*alayh*) is what occurs in the rules of human beings and we agree with them about this.' And they divided it into what's in harmony with nature and what's incompatible with it, as well as what's characterized by perfection and defect. As for the thing to which the analogy is drawn (*al-maqīs*), that's what's current in His ordinances—and we don't agree with them about this. Drawing an analogy from the visible to the

<sup>114</sup> Not found.

<sup>115</sup> On al-Abyārī see p. 492, fn. 167.

transcendental world is unacceptable for several reasons. One is that analogy is of no benefit in matters of reason because the result is mere opinion, whereas only assertion with certainty is of benefit in matters of reason. Another is that good and bad in our rules conform to goals, whereas these are impossible with respect to God the Sublime, and thus analogy is invalid because of the existence of a divider and the absence of a connector.<sup>116</sup> Another is that what's good with respect to God the Sublime is what isn't good with respect to His creatures, as in the previously mentioned similitude of al-Ghazzālī in the *Mustasfā*. Consequently, nothing is bad with respect to God the Sublime because He possesses the power of free disposal in His dominion and does what He wishes in it. God the Sublime has said: 'Say: "To God belongs the conclusive argument, for if He had so wished, He would have guided you all"' (6/149).

Thus the similitudes which al-Samhūdī presents in the beginning of his account about the agreed upon good are all unsound. As for justice, unfairness and ignorance, it was previously mentioned in al-Ghazzālī's account—God be pleased with him—that this is what the Mu'tazilites say but he refutes them with the most cogent refutation—this if al-Samhūdī connects the good and bad in the similitudes to God—He is mighty and glorious! If he connects it to us, that's conceded but it's of no benefit at all with respect to God the Sublime's ordinances which he wanted to establish in this question. As for establishing God the Sublime's divinity, His being elevated above defects, and the impossibility of anything occurring in objective reality (*fi'l-khārij*) contrary to His knowledge, these have nothing at all to do with the subject. Rather they're questions to do with speculative theology (*kalām*). Whatever reason is capable of dealing with independently by means of its perception, reason is then the judge of those questions as in the first and the third similitude. Whatever reason isn't able to deal with on its own but needs the support of revelation for it, there revelation is the judge as in the second similitude. Indeed, proof based on reason is weak in this, as is recognized in the science of speculative theology, and what's relied upon in it is revelation—as they explain this in the affirmation of hearing, sight (241) and speech.<sup>117</sup> Consult the *Ṣughrā*<sup>118</sup> and its commentaries. If everything that reason grasps were like the agreed upon good, then all the questions in the science of speculative

<sup>116</sup> Read *al-jāmi'* as in MS al-Ḥalabiyya instead of *al-māni'*.

<sup>117</sup> From: 'Thus the similitudes...' this passage remains unclear.

<sup>118</sup> See fn. 91 above.



theology which reason grasps would have to be like the agreed upon good. However, no one holds this view. But God knows best!

Then he builds on what he said, adding that existence without the most wonderful is deficiency. This is to be rejected and the two justifications given previously are false. As for his words: 'What isn't the most wonderful is deficient in the view of reason because it's contrary to what wisdom demands', this is also to be rejected because there's nothing bad in God the Sublime's actions and in His ordinances, and His wisdom—He is exalted—has no limit to it. What the contingent understands of it is as nothing. Therefore he can't say: 'This is contrary to what wisdom demands.' Such a judgement comes from him and requires that he encompass the wisdom of God the Sublime, which is inconceivable. As for his words: 'The existence of the most wonderful occurs in God's pre-eternal knowledge and will', this is the essence of a circular argument which was previously explained. And one of the wondrous things he says in this section is: 'And the Ḥanafites being the adherents of Abū Maṣṣūr al-Māturīdī,<sup>119</sup> one of the authorities of the followers of the Sunna, are among those who express the idea that we examined (242) in explaining Ḥujjat al-Islām's meaning<sup>120</sup> since they say: 'In our view it's inconceivable that God the Sublime will forgive the infidel and have him dwell in Paradise for eternity, and it's inconceivable that the believers will dwell in Hell for eternity. For wisdom requires that there be a distinction between the evildoer and him who does good. Whatever is contrary to the judgement of wisdom is stupidity. This is impossible in the case of God the Sublime.'<sup>121</sup>

The sayyid al-Samhūdī says—God have mercy on him: 'This is precisely what Ḥujjat al-Islām states. Nor is he alone among the followers of the Sunna who use this argumentation, maintaining that creation is determined in accordance with wisdom, as well as what was previously discussed concerning agreed upon good and bad. Because of the subtlety of this question and the neglect of the eminent Ash'arites to make clear the cause of dispute regarding good and bad based on reason, since they're themselves well aware that reason has no authority [in the matter], the supporters of Ḥujjat al-Islām have halted at his words in the *Iḥyā'*: "Injustice that contradicts justice", indeed some of them may have even halted at his words: "Miserliness that contradicts generosity". But in what any

<sup>119</sup> Ormsby, *Theodicy*, p. 25; EI s.n.; Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, pp. 1 ff.

<sup>120</sup> From: 'And the Ḥanafites...' up to here=*īdāh*, p. 83, ll. -7 to -5.

<sup>121</sup> Rudolph, *Al-Māturīdī*, pp. 330-34, comments on the sense of these words.

of them have to say I haven't seen reliance on what God has disclosed to me as a justification.' <sup>122</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, say that what appears to him to be a clarification of the cause of dispute is mistaken, as has previously been shown. The mistake arises—but God the Sublime knows best—because he's heard that good and bad, in the sense of being characterized by perfection and defect, are based on reason and agreed upon. He imagined this was universally so in the rules of human beings and in the ordinances of the Lord—He is sublime and exalted—and he was unaware (243) that this is only so in the rules of human beings.

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As for what he reports from the Ḥanafites and his interpretation of Abū Ḥāmid's words in accordance with it, it isn't true for two reasons. The **first reason** is that Abū Ḥāmid states what's contrary to this. He says—God be pleased with him—in the fifth *da'wā* of the third *maṭlab* in *al-Iqtiṣād fī'l-i'tiqād*:

'The claim is that if God the Sublime places religious duties on the bondsmen and they obey Him, He isn't obliged to reward them. Rather, if He so wishes, He rewards them, and if He so wishes, He punishes them, and if He so wishes, He annihilates them and doesn't resurrect them. It makes no difference to Him if He forgives all the infidels and punishes all the believers. This is not impossible in itself, nor does it contradict any attribute among the attributes of divinity. Such is the case because placing religious duties on His bondsmen and His slaves is a power of free disposal that He possesses. As for reward, this is another kind of action by way of spontaneity. If it's said: "Imposing religious duties on someone entails the capacity to reward, and to omit the reward is bad", to this we reply: "If by bad you mean that it's contrary to the goal of the One Who imposes the duty, God is elevated and sanctified above goals! If you mean that it's contrary to the goal of the one who's placed under obligation, this is conceded but what's bad for the one under obligation isn't forbidden for God the Sublime to do. Good and bad in His view and with respect to Him are one and the same. But even if we went along with their false opinion, we wouldn't concede that whoever is served by his slaves is bound to give a reward as a matter of course. A reward is in exchange for work, and the benefit of slavery would be nullified. What's correct for the slave is to serve his master because he's a slave. If he served him for a recompense, this wouldn't be service." One of the amazing things they say is that

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<sup>122</sup> *Īqāh*, p. 84, ll. 1-6.

the bondsmen must show gratitude because they're bondsmen, by way of fulfilling their obligation for His benefactions. Then God the Sublime is obliged to reward them for their gratitude. But this is absurd. When what's a proper duty is carried out, no recompense is necessary.

Still more detestable than this is their view [concerning]: God the Sublime is obliged to punish every infidel for eternity and to keep him eternally in Hell. [They say:] This is ignorance regarding magnanimity and generosity, reason, customary usage, the law, and all affairs. We say that customary usage requires and reason indicates that indulgence and forgiveness are better than punishment and revenge. People praise someone who shows forgiveness more than they praise someone who takes revenge. They have greater approval for forgiveness. How can bestowing favor and forgiveness be deemed bad, and revenge after a long period be deemed good? This is even the case for someone who's been harmed by a crime and whose worth has been decreased by the sin. But for God the Sublime obedience and sin are one and the same, and unbelief and faith, with respect to the Possessor of awe-inspiring fear and majesty, are one and the same.

Moreover, how is it deemed good—if we build on their [erroneous] words—to perpetuate punishment forever and forever, through all eternity, in return for a sin involving a single remark during one instant? (244) A person whose reason reaches this extreme in its judging something good belongs more properly in a hospice for the sick than in the gatherings of religious scholars. But we say that if someone travelled a path the very opposite of this, he'd be more true to his words and in greater conformity with the principle of approving the good and deploring the bad on the basis of which fantasy and imagination judge—as was previously described. And so we say [pursuing this line of thought] it is bad for a human being to punish someone for a crime committed in the past and which is difficult to make amends for, other than in two cases. Firstly, if the punishment constitutes prevention and causes some improvement in the future, then it's good. Otherwise, there would be fear of failing in one's purpose in the future. But if there's no improvement in it at all, punishment, as explained, is bad. Harm is only for the benefit of what's in the past, and what's in the past can't be compensated for. So this would be extremely bad.

Secondly, we say if the victim of a crime suffers harm and takes revenge and his anger is intense, this anger causes pain. Satisfying the anger brings relief from the pain, and pain is more appropriate

for the criminal. But here as well is something else to consider. If there's evidence of a lack of reason on the victim's part and anger's domination of him, then the obligation to punish, when no one's improvement before God is involved and no harm is warded off from the victim, is something extremely bad. This then is more true than the view of someone who says: "omitting punishment is something extremely bad."

All the above is false and adherence to it is caused by fantasies which occur through imagining goals, but God the Sublime is raised in sanctity above any goals. Here we simply wished to confront the false with the false and thereby clarify the falsity of their fantasy.<sup>123</sup>

This is what Abū Hāmid says—God be pleased with him—and I've cited it at length because of its excellence and high degree of veracity. I'm amazed by those who construe his words in their opposite sense. But God knows best!

The **second reason** is that to the words of the Hanafites: 'In our view it's inconceivable that God the Sublime will forgive, etc.' one replies: 'If the said forgiveness is impossible, its impossibility is either "essential" or "accidental", i.e. necessary because of something else.' If they say: 'It's essential', they must maintain that divine omnipotence isn't connected with it because of its being impossible, nor with its opposite because of its being necessary. Omnipotence is neither connected with the necessary, nor with the impossible. This amounts to causation which leads to denying God's attributes. If its impossibility is accidental and necessary because of something else, they must be asked: 'What's this something else?' If they say: 'It's what preceded [in pre-eternity] in God's knowledge', they're to be told: 'This doesn't contradict the possibility of (245) the said forgiveness from the point of view of its essence.' If they say: 'It's what God's wisdom requires', they must be told firstly: 'God's wisdom is based on divine knowledge and omnipotence, and what they have authority over has no limit. Thus His wisdom has no limit. Now have you encompassed the wisdom of God the Sublime which has no limit to it?' It's impossible that they've encompassed it.

And if they say what al-Khaḍir said to Moses—peace be upon them: 'Compared with God's knowledge the smallness of my knowledge and your knowledge is surely like the smallness of this sparrow's sip of water from the sea', they must be told: 'Silence would be more appropriate for you, if only you had understanding.'

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<sup>123</sup> *Iqtisād*, pp. 182 ff.

And secondly: 'Is the Lord—He is sublime—under constraint and compulsion due to what wisdom demands, or is that not the case?' If they say: 'Such is the case', they must maintain incapacity with regard to the Deity—He is sublime and elevated above this by a great elevation! If they say: 'Such isn't the case and God the Sublime can do what is contrary to that', they nullify their own teaching and so they return to the clear truth and the true doctrine.

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Then the sayyid al-Samhūdī—God have mercy on him—endeavored to support the teaching of the Ḥanafites with regard to designating the bad and in doing so he widened the field, in this way attempting to include Abū Ḥāmid in their number because they're people of the Sunna and the Community. But how can it be true that Abū Ḥāmid agreed with them since he demolished their doctrine and turned it upside down. The situation of someone who through his reason considers bad is possible in God the Sublime's actions must fall into one of three cases. Either he claims to have encompassed God the Sublime's knowledge and His secrets within His creation. But how is this possible since God the Sublime has said: 'You have only been given very little of knowledge' (17/85). And God the Sublime has said: 'They do not encompass Him in knowledge' (20/110). Or he must abide by the words of al-Khaḍir to Moses—peace be upon them—and this amounts to acknowledging the wickedness of his doctrine and the falsehood of his audacity in his designation of the bad. Or he must persist in drawing a comparison between God the Sublime as far as His actions and God's bondsmen as far as their talk and conversations, and this is a false comparison—as was previously explained.

The doctrine that bad can exist in the actions of God the Sublime is false with respect to all probability and untrue in every circumstance. Abū Ḥāmid says in the *Iqtisād*—God have mercy on him: 'So it has become clear that the sources of those who consider it possible for bad to be in God the Sublime's actions are fantasies firmly rooted in them through their habits, which other similar fantasies oppose and which are unavoidable'—i.e. as he previously explained about their considering it impossible to punish the obedient and the reverse of this. And he also says: 'This is so even though it's clear to the reason, and one mustn't overlook it because people's coming forward and their recoiling in their words, (246) their beliefs and their actions, follow fantasies like this. As for acting in accordance with pure reason, only the Friends of God the Sublime have the strength for this. God has shown them the truth as it really is and

strengthened them to follow it. If you want to test this with regard to doctrinal beliefs, present a weighty rational question to the understanding of a Muʿtazilite layman and he'll quickly come to accept it. But if you say it's the doctrine of the Ashʿarites, he'll recoil and refuse to accept it. He'll change into a denier after he'd confirmed its truth, no matter how good an opinion he has of al-Ashʿarī, since its badness has been in his soul from childhood. And it's the same if you report a rational matter to an Ashʿarite layman. Once you tell him: "This is a Muʿtazilite doctrine", he'll refuse to accept it and will turn to denying it after having confirmed its truth.

I'm not saying this is the nature of laymen with respect to the principle of adopting the doctrine of an authority. Rather this is the nature of most of those I've met who are designated as religious scholars. They're no different from the laity with respect to the principle of following an authority. Indeed, in addition to following a particular school's doctrine (*madhhab*) they follow an authority when it comes to the principle of proof. In their reflection they don't seek the truth but they seek a stratagem to support what they believe to be true on the basis of hearing and following an authority. If in their reflection they come across what confirms their belief, they say: "We've obtained the proof." But if what appears to them weakens their argument and their doctrine, they say: "We've met with a specious argument", and they completely thwart the victorious belief by following an authority, and they reject whoever opposes them as employing a specious argument and accept whoever agrees with them as employing proof.<sup>124</sup> These are the words of Abū Ḥāmid—God be pleased with him!

As for the view of the Ḥanafites: 'The opposite of wisdom is foolishness', Abū Ḥāmid says in the *Iqtiṣād*—God be pleased with him: 'This is an error. Foolishness is an action by which the agent suffers loss, as well as an action which has no gain or loss in it for the agent. All of that is only appropriate concerning someone who can experience loss and whose actions pursue goals. But God the Sublime is elevated above this!' He says—God be pleased with him: 'This is a deception because futile action consists of an action devoid of benefit on the part of someone who has concern for benefits. It's absolutely inconceivable to describe someone who has no concern for benefits as acting futilely. There's no truth to it. It's as if a person said: "The wall is inattentive", i.e. devoid of knowledge and ignorance. This is false because "inattentive" is applied to someone

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<sup>124</sup> Here ends the final part of the quotation from *Iqtiṣād*, pp. 182 ff.

who's capable of possessing knowledge and ignorance and who's devoid of them. To apply the word figuratively to something that's incapable of this has no basis to it. And it's the same for applying "futility" to God—He is blessed and sublime—and applying "futility" to His actions.'<sup>125</sup> Here end his words—God be pleased with him!

What he says contains persuasiveness and effective information, and by means of it you'll understand what's contained in the words of the sayyid al-Samhūdī: 'Because of the subtlety of this idea (247) and because the eminent Ash'arites neglected to express the cause of the dispute, Abū Ḥāmid's supporters have halted at his words: "Injustice which contradicts justice and miserliness which contradicts generosity".' It's become clear that this idea contains no subtlety but rather it's false, and there's been no neglect in expressing the cause of the dispute.

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As for Abū Ḥāmid's supporters halting before 'injustice' and 'miserliness', it wasn't proper for them to come to a halt. Rather it was their duty to take the initiative to refute him and reject him. For he can be refuted by means of self-evident reasoning (*badāha*) and it isn't true that he only proceeds according to the principles of the philosophers and the Mu'tazilites. Abū Ḥāmid is elevated above that! He's repeatedly made manifest and taught with excellent results the refutation of their impossible position and the vain finery of their falsehood such that his benefit to Islam is great and his blessing to the religious scholars is obvious. [Abū Bakr] Ibn al-°Arabī, after mentioning the philosophers and their teachings that are contrary to Islam, says in the *'Awāṣim*<sup>126</sup>—God have mercy on him:

'And God brought forth a group of defenders (*'āṣima*) who through God's imposition and His support dedicated and devoted themselves exclusively to refuting them. But they didn't speak the same language as the philosophers and they didn't refute them according to their own method. They refuted them and their brethren, the heretical innovators, by means of what God says in His book and what He has taught us through His Prophet's tongue. Since the latter didn't comprehend these purposes because of the rust of falsehood that dominated their minds, they began to make fun of their expressions and to discredit their proofs and they accused anyone who employed them of ignorance. They'd carry on laughing with

<sup>125</sup> This is similar to *Iqtīṣād*, p. 179, ll. -12 ff.

<sup>126</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 148, CXXIX; Abū Bakr b. al-°Arabī died 543/1148; on him see p. 315, fn. 194; *'Awāṣim*, pp. 77 ff.

their colleagues behind closed doors. Then Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī devoted himself to refuting them in their own language and combatting them with their own weapons and contradicting them with their own proofs. He achieved brilliant results in this, as God showed him and wished. He attained their disgrace, as intended, and he destroyed their teachings on the basis of their own teachings, slaughtering them with their own knives.

And what he produced is excellent and what he transmitted and considered right consists of the best. And without becoming a partner with the people of heretical innovations he composed a book against them, treating what they specialize in. He gave it the title *Tahāfut al-falāsifa*.<sup>127</sup> In it his benefaction is obvious and his rank on the ladder of knowledge is clear. He was brilliant in deducing from the Qurʾān whatever proofs he wished in orderly succession according to the standard they themselves had stipulated, by way of five marvelous rules contained in a book he entitled the *Qistāṣ*.<sup>128</sup> And in the *Miʿyār al-ʿilm*<sup>129</sup> he used the method of logic (*manṭiq*) against them. This book he adorned with examples from jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and speculative theology (*kalām*). As a result, in the book he eradicates the traces of the philosophers and has left them neither a similitude, nor anyone to formulate a similitude. And he brought this forth pure of their machinations. (248) And some fool from among the rustics of our country, by the name of Ibn Ḥazm,<sup>130</sup> when he'd read something of al-Kindī's<sup>131</sup> words, turned his attention to writing on logic. He produced what resembled his own reason and was like his own worth. On the other hand, Abū Ḥāmid—God have mercy on him—was a crown in the summit of the nights and a necklace on the breast of the lofty heights.'—This is the gist of Ibn al-ʿArabī's words—God have mercy on him!

As for al-Ghazzālī's refutation of the Muʿtazilites and his elucidation of the evil of their belief, this he does brilliantly in his book the *Iqtīṣād*.<sup>132</sup> In the book he especially gives attention to the impossibility of wrongdoing on His part—He is mighty and glorious—where he states: 'If it's said that it', i.e. causing pain to the innocent, 'leads to wrongdoing, God the Sublime has declared: "God is never unjust to His bondsmen" (3/182, 8/51, 22/10). [For

<sup>127</sup> Bouyges, *Essai* 23, no. 16.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid.

<sup>129</sup> Bouyges, *Essai* 27, no. 20.

<sup>130</sup> EI s.n.

<sup>131</sup> The famous philosopher; died 252/866; cf. EI s.n.

<sup>132</sup> Not found in the *Iqtīṣād*.



our part,] we say: “Wrongdoing for God is rejected by way of a categorical negation, just as inattentiveness is denied for a wall and futility for the wind. Wrongdoing is only imaginable of a person whose action can possibly be connected to someone else’s property, and this isn’t imaginable with respect to God the Sublime, or for a person who’s under someone’s command so that his action can contravene someone else’s order. Nor is it imaginable that a human being will be unjust with regard to his own property in whatever he does, except if he violates the command of the law. Then he’s unjust in that sense. But a person concerning whom it’s unimaginable that he disposes over someone else’s property, and concerning whom it’s unimaginable that he’s under someone else’s order, wrongdoing is removed from him. Grasp this subtle point, for it’s a place where feet may slip. If wrongdoing is interpreted in a sense other than this, it’s incomprehensible and can’t be spoken of in negation or affirmation.”<sup>133</sup>

These are al-Ghazzālī’s words—God be pleased with him! On the basis of this and other things as well, the treatise of the sayyid al-Samhūdī is swept away—God have mercy on him—and the falsity of what he says about wrongdoing and miserliness is apparent to you—both of which were referred to (249) in the previous discussion. I’ve omitted devoting further attention to this because of my knowledge of its inadequacy and out of fear of prolixity. But God knows best!

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As for **the third point**, which is that the sayyid al-Samhūdī—God be pleased with him—didn’t understand the meaning of Ibn al-Munayyir—God have mercy on him—I won’t go into this subject because of the prolixity it entails. I’ll only say something brief about it, namely that most of what Ibn al-Munayyir mentions is sound. It’s the truth without doubt. And his refutations of the *Iḥyā’* are straight and contain no swerving from what’s right, whereas the responses of the sayyid al-Samhūdī to them are incomplete. There’s only one exception to this concerning which I disagree with Ibn al-Munayyir and that’s where he diminishes the standing of Abū Ḥāmid and lowers him from his rank. I don’t agree with that because Abū Ḥāmid is the authority on matters of the world and of religion, the scholar of Islam and the Muslims. The words [in question] that have been attributed to him in the *Iḥyā’* are an interpolation and fabricated. Indeed, what he says in his books—God be pleased with

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<sup>133</sup> *Iqtisād*, p. 182, ll. 3-12.

him—refutes them in every way. You will see [below] what supports this—if God is willing! But God knows best!

.....

As for **the third group** who believe the matter shouldn't be attributed to Abū Hāmid—God be pleased with him—and that it's a fabrication, their basis for this view is that they've compared it with what Abū Hāmid says in his books and found it's at variance with his words. An intelligent person doesn't believe in two contradictory things, and certainly Abū Hāmid doesn't—God be pleased with him! Therefore we've judged that the attribution of this matter to him is false—God be pleased with him! In other passages in his writings Abū Hāmid has said what contradicts this. Let's record some of that here. Thus we say:

The first passage is what was already cited from the *Mustaṣfā* where he states: 'And their saying that He leaves them to exercise restraint by themselves so they'll merit the reward is nonsense because He knows they won't restrain themselves. So let Him stop them by force, for how many a person has been hindered from indecent acts because of incapacity and impotence! And this is better than empowering them in the knowledge that they won't restrain themselves.'

Now the textual evidence in his words is: 'And this is better...', i.e. stopping them by force, or because of incapacity and impotence, is better than empowering them. Now empowering was the case, whereas stopping by force, etc., was what wasn't the case. He clearly states this is more excellent and more wonderful than what is. Thus there is in possibility something more excellent than what is.

Moreover, he composed the *Mustaṣfā* at the end of his life after he'd returned from travelling and living in seclusion. He composed the *Ihyā'* before that as he indicates in the introduction (250) to the *Mustaṣfā*. The date of his withdrawal from religious learning and teaching, and his personal flight, was the year 488 in the month of that year Dhū'l-Qa'da, and his return to religious learning and teaching was in Dhū'l-Qa'da of the year 499. The period of his withdrawal lasted eleven years. And he's set forth the reasons for his withdrawal—God be pleased with him—and the reasons for his return to religious learning. In his book *al-Munqidh min al-ḍalāl*<sup>134</sup> he treats all this at length, as well as matters connected with it. Let whoever wishes consult this in the book. But God the Sublime knows best!

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<sup>134</sup> *Munqidh*, French translation, p. 98.

In the second passage, he says in the *Iqtisād*—God be pleased with him: ‘As for the existing creation, all intelligent people wish for non-being. The one says: “Oh would that I were something utterly forgotten!”, while another says: “Oh would that I were nothing!” And still another says: “Oh would that I were a piece of straw wafted aloft from the earth!” And these are the words of the prophets and the Friends of God. They’re the intelligent people. Some of them wish for creation’s non-existence, and others wish for the non-existence of religious obligations so as to be an inanimate body. I’d like to know how anyone intelligent finds it possible to say to people that there’s an [intrinsic] benefit in the religious obligations. Rather benefit is in the banning of discomfort, whereas the religious obligations are in themselves the imposition of discomfort and that’s pain. If He considered reward—and that’s benefit—He’s able to confer it on them without the religious obligations. If it’s said: “Reward which is merited is more sweet and more exquisite than reward granted through benevolence and spontaneously”, the answer is: “Seeking refuge with God from reason that results in haughtiness before God, being too proud to bear His benevolence, and deeming pleasure to be seceding from His bounty, is more appropriate than seeking refuge with God from Satan the Accursed.”

Would that I knew how someone is reckoned to be intelligent in whose mind these wicked suggestions occur! A person who finds it burdensome to reside eternally in Paradise without having first undergone the hardship of the religious obligations is too base to address and debate with.’ And then he adds: ‘We seek protection with God from the total absence of reason which characterizes this way of speaking. One should ask God to confer reason on one’s interlocutor and not become involved in debating with him.’<sup>135</sup> And there are numerous other passages [like this] which have been cited from the words of the *Iqtisād*, as well as passages which haven’t been cited. I haven’t recorded them for fear of becoming tedious. But God the Sublime knows best!

As for the third passage, al-Ghazzālī says in (250) the *Ihyā’* in the chapter *Qawā’id al-‘aqā’id*: ‘God the Sublime has created mankind and their works, and ordained their forms of sustenance and their time of death. Nothing that’s possible falls outside His omnipotence, and free disposal over affairs doesn’t elude His omnipotence. The things God is capable of aren’t subject to number, nor is there a limit to what He knows.’<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Not found.

<sup>136</sup> *Ihyā’* I, p. 90, ll. 19-21.

Then he says: 'God acts graciously through His creation, contrivance and imposing religious duties, but not out of necessity, and He renders good service through His bounty, but not as an obligation. He's endowed with generosity and goodness, bounty and benevolence. For He's capable of inflicting on His bondsmen different forms of punishment and inflicting them with a variety of pains and hardships. And if He were to do so, it would be justice on His part. It wouldn't be evil and injustice, since He isn't obliged to act. Moreover, injustice can't be imagined in His regard and no one has a rightful claim on Him.'<sup>137</sup>

And he continues: 'If it's said: "Inasmuch as He's able to do good to the bondsmen but then He afflicts them with causes of punishment, that's bad and isn't worthy of divine wisdom"...' He replies to this and at a certain point he says: 'Bad is unimaginable in His regard—He is sublime—just as injustice is unimaginable in His regard—He is sublime—since making use of someone else's property is unimaginable in His regard—He is sublime!' And he goes on to say: 'Then "the Wise" means knowing the realities of things and being able to do them expertly according to one's desire. This is where the notion of His observing the optimum (*al-aṣṣlah*) comes from. Among us someone who's wise observes the optimum for himself in order to obtain praise for this in the world and reward in the hereafter or to ward off harm and punishment from himself. But all of this is inconceivable for God the Sublime.' And numerous [such] passages occur in the *Ihyā'*. You may consult this work.

Now Burhān al-Dīn al-Biqā'ī<sup>138</sup>—God the Sublime have mercy on him—has taken it upon himself to collect all this in his previously mentioned treatise. If you reflect on this, you'll know with certainty that it contradicts what's attributed to al-Ghazzālī in the question under discussion. In it al-Ghazzālī judges that refraining from creating the more wonderful, while having the ability to do so, is injustice and miserliness. Here he judges that inflicting punishment, pains and hardships on people constitutes justice and contains no injustice. The contradiction between the two is obvious and clear. If refraining from creating the more wonderful is an injustice, which contradicts justice, then surely inflicting punishment, pains and hardships is an injustice that contradicts justice to an even greater extent. But here he judges it to be justice devoid of any injustice and that makes it necessary, to an even greater extent, for refraining from creating the more wonderful to be the same way and to be justice

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid. I, p. 91.

<sup>138</sup> See fn. 65 above.

devoid of any injustice. But he declares in the question under discussion that it's an injustice that contradicts justice. Thus the two statements collapse. Now this is perfectly clear. Perhaps you can acquaint yourself with the previously mentioned treatise of the sayyid al-Samhūdī—God have mercy on him! Then you'll find that in it he refers to a unity between the question at issue and some of what was previously cited from the *Iḥyā'*, a unity that's extremely feeble and utterly faulty. Let the reader be wary (252) of it! If not for fear of being tedious, I'd here explain its faultiness, yet the truth is obvious for the intelligent. But God knows best!

If you should say: 'How can the statement in question be falsely ascribed to him since it occurs in a number of his books, in particular in the previously mentioned *al-Ajwiba al-muskita*? In fact, this requires that he was aware of the difficulty—God be pleased with him—and he undertook an answer about it. If it had been falsely ascribed to him, as you imagine, he'd have quickly denied it and washed his hands of its evil and its defect.'

I would answer: 'There's nothing to hinder the false attribution from occurring several times, one time when the statement in question was ascribed to him and another time when the answer concerning it was ascribed to him.' The *qāḍī* Abū Bakr al-Bāqillānī says in the book the *Intiṣār*<sup>139</sup> what amounts to: 'When the existence of a particular question in a book or in a thousand books is attributed to an authority, it doesn't prove that he actually said it unless it's transmitted from him by multiple transmitters in which the two ends [of the text] and the middle are the same.' Now this is wholly lacking with regard to our statement and for this reason we've declared with certainty that he didn't say it. Indeed, we've found that it's contrary to the doctrine of the followers of the Sunna and to the words of al-Ghazzālī in his other books. But God knows best!

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In short, if the proof of what's attributed to him in this statement is God's injustice that contradicts His justice, Abū Ḥāmid denies this in the words previously cited. If its proof is God's miserliness, Abū Ḥāmid denies this in the previously cited words of the *Iqtiṣād*. If its proof is that it's contrary to divine wisdom, then Abū Ḥāmid has declared this to be false in the *Iḥyā'*, in the *Iqtiṣād* and in other works as well. If its proof is discernment of the good on the basis of reason and observing rightness (*ṣalāh*) and the optimum (*al-aṣlah*), then Abū Ḥāmid has declared this to be false in the *Iqtiṣād*, in the

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<sup>139</sup> See p. 196, fn. 208.

*lhyā'* and in the *Qistās*. If its proof is agreed upon discernment of the good which al-Samhūdī relies on—God have mercy on him—we've shown this to be false in what was previously presented. If its proof is what preceded in God's knowledge and volition, which is also what al-Samhūdī relies upon—God have mercy on him—then we've made clear in what was previously discussed that this is a circular argument. And if its proof is that the defective doesn't issue from the perfect, we've previously made clear the falsity of this. But God knows best!

I've treated this question at length and turned my attention to the contradiction in the previous answers regarding it because I saw that most people are ignorant about it and in criticizing it rely on what Abū Hāmid—God be pleased with him—has promulgated about it. Abū Hāmid [himself] says in his book *al-Munqidh min al-dalāl*—God be pleased with him: 'This is the usual practice of those with weak minds. They know the truth through the eminent men and not the eminent men through the truth. (253) An intelligent person follows the words of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Alī b. Abī Ṭālib—God be pleased with him—when he says: "Don't know the truth through the eminent men. Know the truth and you'll know those who possess it!" So an intelligent person knows the truth and then considers the words themselves. If the words are true, he accepts them, whether he who speaks them tells the truth or is a liar.' And he goes on to say: 'This natural disposition is prevalent among most people. Whenever you ascribe a saying and trace it back to someone people firmly believe in, they accept it, even if it's false. If you trace it back to someone whom they are loath to believe in, they reject it, even if it's true. They forever know the truth through eminent men, and this is the utmost degree in error.'<sup>140</sup> These are his words—God be pleased with him!

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And God the Blessed, the Sublime, protected me from Abū Hāmid—God have mercy on him—through our Shaykh—God be pleased with him! That is to say, when I resolved to refute this question and to show its falsity and explain the evil of its absurdity, the Shaykh stood before me—God be pleased with him—and filled my heart with reverence for Abū Hāmid—God be pleased with him—and increased his loftiness in my eyes and magnified him in my sight so that my interior became replete with this. As a result, my refutations were directed to the question and they were in no way a

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<sup>140</sup> *Al-Munqidh*, French translation, Part 5, pp. 108 ff.

discredit to Abū Ḥāmid. In fact, nothing occurred on my tongue—praise be to God—but veneration and respect for Abū Ḥāmid. This was one of the greatest blessings I received from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and one of his greatest favors to me. And this he did even after his death, for I beheld him—God be pleased with him—and I was aware he was dead and I was myself between sleep and waking. He continued to speak to me and I to him and it went on like this until we turned to Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazzālī—God have mercy on him! He then said—God be pleased with him: ‘He’s a Pivot.’ And he ordered me to revere him greatly. He said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘He wears clothes such as I’ve never seen.’ Or: ‘Whenever he enters before me dressed in them I feel insignificant. He’s one of the great Friends of God.’

Then he said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Listen to what I tell you today.’ And he intertwined his noble fingers with my fingers. He said: ‘This is the oath of the Prophet or the intertwining of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Verily, he’s a great Friend of God!’ Then I spoke [further] with him about al-Ghazzālī and once again he intertwined his fingers with mine, to the effect that: ‘He’s a great Friend of God!’ He then said—God be pleased with him: ‘Indeed, Abū Ḥāmid is with me’, or he said: ‘He doesn’t separate from me. He asks me many questions about sciences which are needed, needed, that is, in the hereafter.’ This is some of what occurred in this dream vision. I arose in the morning and—praise be to God—an immense love entered into me for Abū Ḥāmid—God have mercy on him—and nothing of the harshness (254) of what I expressed in any way did him harm. God bestowed on me good behavior with him and this was because of the blessing of the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

Perfect praise be unto God and absolute gratitude. We beseech God—He is sublime and exalted—to make the letters that we’ve written on this question be purely for His noble face and a cause of His general approval. There’s no strength and no power save in God the Most High, the All-powerful! ‘Praise be to God Who guided us unto this; if God had not guided us, we would surely not have been guided’ (7/43). God’s blessings and peace be upon our lord Muḥammad, the unschooled Prophet, and upon his family and Companions—and may it be repeated numerous times! And praise be to God, Lord of the worlds!

## CHAPTER EIGHT

Pp. 828-30. God collected Adam's dust during ten days, left it in water for twenty days and then formed it for forty days. It then developed from a clay state to a corporeal state during another twenty days. The dust was taken from all kinds of metal. God spent this much time creating Adam so the angels would watch and acquire knowledge of His Oneness (*tawhīd*). The special nature and origin of the water God used. The formation of Adam's flesh, bones and blood.

Pp. 830-33. Adam attempts to stand up. God gives him higher vision (*mushāhada*). Adam utters the name 'Allāh' and professes God's Oneness and that Muḥammad is God's Apostle. Eve is created in Paradise from Adam's rib. The fig-tree was the tree God forbade Adam to eat from because it causes a bowel movement. Kinds of delights (foods) in Paradise. Dire effect that eating from the fig-tree had on Adam's mind.

Pp. 833-35. God created the animals Adam had need of in the world from the mud left over from Adam's creation. Adam's offspring possess the most handsome physique. The body of a human being is made up of more components than an angel's body. Muḥammad was formed with a human body because it's the strongest of all bodies with regard to bearing the Lordly secrets.

Pp. 835-37. One group of human beings is destined for Hell-fire. God has placed a veil over their body and their divine vision (*mushāhada*) disappeared. Persons in this category experience estrangement from God and put all their reliance in reason. God sent apostles to lead people back to Him. One group of people responded, another remained wholly attached to reason. Al-Lamaṭī asks whether the veil consists of the blood. Al-Dabbāgh replies it's a darkness that comes from Hell-fire.

Pp. 837-38. The similitude of a father's love for his child who suffers from an ugly sickness (smallpox). The two categories of people who respond to God's apostles: ordinary believers and those who have received illumination. The latter are like a beggar who keeps asking for more. They're so absorbed in God that they're unaware of death when it arrives. This is death's remedy!



## (257) CHAPTER EIGHT

Mention of what we heard from him—God be pleased with him—about the creation of our father Adam and the graduated stages of his affair—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—as well as an explanation of how Adam's offspring are the most excellent of created beings and the shape of their form is the most excellent of shapes.

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'When God the Sublime wished to create Adam<sup>1</sup>—peace be upon him—He set about gathering his dust for ten days and then left it in water for twenty days. Then He formed him for forty days and after his formation left him for twenty days to transfer from a clay state to a corporeal state. This comes to a total of three months, namely Rajab, Sha<sup>c</sup>bān and Ramaḍān. Next God elevated Adam to Paradise and breathed into him of His spirit—while he was in Paradise. And Eve was created from Adam while he was in Paradise. So Eve's creation took place in Paradise. When they'd been in Paradise for two months, carnal desire was infused into them and Adam had intercourse with Eve. She then conceived and, after having descended to earth, she gave birth three months from the time of her conception. The length of her stay in Paradise was nine months. Subsequently, when she became pregnant on earth, she gave birth after a period of nine months. And this has continued until today.'

I asked: 'What dust was Adam created from?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Dust from all the metals: the metal gold, the metal silver, the metal copper, and the other metals. Thus his dust was taken from every metal. This was collected together in a place and Adam was created from it.'

And I asked: 'Who actually collected it?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: (258) 'Angels and whoever else God wished. The one among them who carried the most [dust] was our lord Gabriel—peace be upon him—because God had promised Gabriel that he'd be an associate and companion of a creature made from dust who was the dearest of all creatures to God. Gabriel would acquire an immense blessing from him. This was the lord of creation—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And so Gabriel went on gathering dust, thinking it was for the creature who'd been promised to him.'

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<sup>1</sup> Schöck, *Adam*, pp. 67 ff.

I asked: 'What was the amount of the dust?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'An amount [sufficient] to fill a mile of land or a little less. That is to say, they gathered a great quantity of dust amounting to the surface area mentioned.'

And I asked: 'Why did they need ten days to gather it? God the Sublime has the power to gather it in an instant.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'God the Sublime has the power to create the heavens and the earths in an instant. So why did He spread out their creation over six days? And He has the power to create Adam without dust. So why did He fashion him from dust? But God the Sublime creates some things and arranges their creation over days and brings it about stage by stage so that this engenders knowledge of God's oneness (*tawhīd*) among the Heavenly Host. The transference of this event from one phase to another and from one state to another and its taking on appearance little by little entails an indescribable focusing of the lofty aspirations of the Heavenly Host. They turn their attentions to it in astonishment at God's affair in this event and in reflection on God's greatness, wondering how He creates it, what it's going to be and what thing it's about to become. They await expectantly the state it's emerging into. Once that state occurs, they experience knowledge of God's oneness that exceeds description or any reckoning. During the time they wait expectantly, they acquire an awesome knowledge of God the Sublime and awareness of His dazzling omnipotence and its operation in the realm of possibilities. None of the secrets of divine omnipotence regarding this creature escapes them and they receive complete instruction about him. This is the wisdom behind the procedure by stages. And there's a further wise reason, namely that through this procedure by stages, the waiting for the occurrence to emerge, and the longing for it, other creatures may come into being such as the one that's come about or a greater one.<sup>2</sup> In every matter God the Sublime possesses secrets and wise reasons!'

(259) I asked: 'What's this water that his dust was placed in and left for twenty days?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It's a special water with benefit for the body of Adam and his progeny. It contained this benefit because of being water of the earth that Adam is actually related to. It resembles Adam's body and is compatible with it.'

And I asked: 'Does the water come from the earth's basic element or what's its situation?'

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<sup>2</sup> Animals were created from what was left over of Adam's dust. See here p. 833 bot.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘It doesn’t come from the earth’s basic element but it happens to have flowed over most parts of the earth. Now of the waters that flow over the earth there are those that flow over some part of it and they only acquire the secret of that part. And there are other waters that flow over most parts or all of the earth, and they acquire the secret of those parts. This water is a spring among the springs that gush up from the earth and it comes from the land of Syria. And that’s where Adam’s dust was gathered—blessings and peace be upon him—in a depression in the earth. The surface extent of it is what we previously mentioned. His dust was moistened with this water because it’s fed by the waters that are at the earth’s extremities. You see it moving through the earth’s confines, penetrating its parts until it ends up in that spring, and it arrives there from all directions. And the spring still remains to this day. It contains a wholesomeness for the body that isn’t found in any other waters on the earth’s surface.’

He said: ‘So that dust remained in the water for the said amount of time, i.e. twenty days. Meanwhile, Adam’s formation began—blessings and peace be upon him—and he was inside this mud. Little by little he continued to acquire a form until the process was completed in forty days. During this time he was inside the mud and nothing of him was visible. After that God the Sublime wanted him to transfer from the state of clay to the body of a human being (an offspring of Adam). Then something like a boil appeared on his fingers until it filled them. Next it burst and its matter congealed on the finger and became white like the pith of a palm-tree. It then spread over him limb by limb, part by part, until he became completely like the pith of a palm-tree in purity and moist freshness or like clear dough whose flour is made from pure wheat. (260) And so it was from this that Adam’s form was fashioned. Next the qualities of blood entered into him little by little and the mud flaked off him. A drying out took place in him and winds began to waft over him. Dryness appeared in his bodily parts and bones then formed—with the permission of God. And when his constitution was completed in twenty days and God wanted the spirit to be breathed into him, He transferred him to Paradise and elevated him to it.’

I asked: ‘Which Paradise was it?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The first Paradise. And when he alighted there, the spirit entered into him, and reason and knowledge entered into him. He acquired awareness of God—He is mighty and glorious! Then he wished to stand up but he trembled and fell. And he wished to stand again but again the same thing

happened. It was like the way infants fall when they want to stand up. Next God the Sublime provided him with vision (*mushāhada*) which was mentioned earlier in connection with the [divine] names.<sup>3</sup> He stood on one leg, resting his other knee on the ground. Then when he received that vision, he said: "Allāh, Allāh, Allāh! There is no god but God. Muḥammad is the Apostle of God." And God the Sublime provided him with the power and he was able to stand up by himself. He began to walk in Paradise and go wherever he wished. Then God cast a pain upon him in his rib, and something like a great abscess formed there until it protruded from him, having the size of a human being's head. It remained with him until it gave forth something like a small bodily frame and the small bodily frame fell to the ground. Adam looked at it and behold, it had the same form as himself. He then left it and the winds and fragrant breezes of Paradise wafted over the small body. This assisted it to grow rapidly. Adam began to inspect it and he found it was growing big with great rapidity. He then became familiar with it and sat with it. Next God cast reason into the little body and it began to converse with Adam. When they'd both spent [another] two months in Paradise, God the Sublime cast carnal desire into them and Adam had intercourse with Eve. For she was the little body referred to. She became pregnant and gave birth within the time mentioned.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'God elevated Adam to Paradise so that his body would be given to drink from the lights of Paradise. (261) This was so his progeny wouldn't forget the covenant that God had them swear on the day of: "Am I not your Lord?", and by way of honoring our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The possessors of deeper insights are aware of this.'

Then I asked: 'And what was the tree that God forbade Adam to eat from?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It was the fig-tree without any doubt.' He said: 'He forbade him to eat of it because that tree and other varieties of trees as well that are in Paradise cause bowel movement in whoever eats from them. Thus God the Sublime forbade him to eat from it lest he experience bowel movement, and he cease to be among the dwellers in Paradise.'

I said: 'The foods and fruits of Paradise, and the delights Paradise contains, though they assume a visible shape, are lights without any

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<sup>3</sup> See pp. 732 ff.

weight to them—as numerous *ḥadīths* have attested. What has no weight doesn't cause a bowel movement.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'What you say is true but when the people of Paradise enter Paradise on the Day of Resurrection, the foundation of their bodies is sound. It's perfectly clear they possess strength. Their bodies aren't like Adam's body when he entered Paradise. Thus if delights descend into the bodies of the people of Paradise, their bodies can support them because of the strength they possess and because on that occasion the bodies are lights just like the delights. Thus the lights return to their origin. This is in contrast to the body of Adam when he entered Paradise. His body was earthen and weak, and so it wasn't able to bear eating from that tree.'

I said: 'This requires that at the time Adam's body couldn't support eating from that tree or from any other.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The trees in Paradise and the delights they contain are of two kinds. One kind, and this is by far the prevalent kind, consists of lights that don't resemble any of the delights in the House of the world. They're lights and have no weight at all. This kind Adam's body could support, and this is what God ordered him to eat from. The other kind, and this is the less common one, consists of delights that resemble the delights found in the House (262) of the world, both in species and quality. And these do have weight. This kind Adam's body couldn't support when he was in Paradise. Thus God the Sublime forbade him to eat from it lest he be expelled from Paradise.'

He said: 'The delight of the people of Paradise is divided into these two kinds because God the Sublime knew in His pre-eternal knowledge that the people of Paradise would be in [one of] two situations. The first situation, which is the predominant one among them, is that the ephemeral world doesn't enter their minds and doesn't occur in their consciousness. The world is absent from their minds along with its affairs and all that it contains of delights. In this situation God the Sublime honors them with "the first kind" and so they eat, drink and have enjoyment of it. The second situation, and this is somewhat rare, is that the ephemeral world does occur in their minds. They visualize the circumstances they were in and yearn for them and they then find them to be present. This is the second kind of delight. The first situation is more perfect from the viewpoint of thought. For those in it are like someone who's with his Lord—He is exalted—and isn't conscious of anything else. And it's more perfect from the viewpoint of delights because these are delights they enjoy

directly and in accordance with what the state of the people of Paradise demands. And it's more perfect from the viewpoint of duration because it prevails over them. The second situation, on the other hand, is inferior to this in all these respects. From the viewpoint of thought, they're like those who are absent from vision (*mushāhada*). They've become conscious of themselves and because of being conscious of themselves they've come to think about matters of the world until they long for its delights.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Since God knew that in some circumstances the people of Paradise have an interest in the House of the world, He created delights in Paradise based on the nature of Paradise, i.e. without any weight, and then due to that interest He created delights in Paradise that aren't based on the nature of Paradise, i.e. with weight and similarity to the delights of the people of the world. But since their bodies in Paradise are powerful lights, no weight appeared in them, whereas since Adam's body was weaker than their bodies at the time he entered Paradise, the weight in these delights did appear in his body. Therefore the weight which is in "the second kind" only appears in a weak body and there was only Adam's body on that day.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Adam's mind—peace be upon him—before he ate from the tree was attached to his Lord and indifferent to his own advantages. When he ate from the tree, the matter was reversed. His mind became attached to his own body. The secret behind this is that before he ate from the tree, his food was (263) enjoyment and amusement without any hunger and thirst being involved. He was spared the condition of hunger and providing himself with sustenance. Thus his mind was attached to his Lord. But when he ate from the tree and experienced a bowel movement and felt hunger after it, his mind turned its attention to the body. He said: "When the belly is emptied, what does it fill itself with?" And so he began to think about how to provide sustenance for it. That's why God the Sublime sent him down to the House of hardship and wretchedness. Now since God—He is exalted—knew this about him and that he'd descend to the earth, He arranged for him means of sustenance—He is exalted! He prepared the paths of sustenance for Adam before he came down from Paradise. When God formed him from the previously described dust and, as mentioned, there was a lot of it, He also formed for him from the same dust every animal he had need of for his livelihood. And their physical nature originated from the dust in question. Indeed, when God the Sublime elevated Adam [to Paradise], all the animals appeared in that clay in the form of

worms. And He created ten of every kind, five males and five females.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The lion, the tiger, the panther...'—al-Dabbāgh counted off five of them—'...all of these being one kind. Then having elevated Adam, God sent an immense rain. No one has ever heard tell of the likes of it. Torrents flowed from every direction and brought with them great quantities of mud. This increased the amount of that first clay. The animals derived immense benefit and powerful assistance from it. It was like the case of someone whose livelihood has expanded, someone who's received abundance and all his resources have multiplied. When Adam descended after nine months, he found the animals roaming over the face of the earth, and they were gradually growing. He became familiar with them and God informed him that they were to be his means of livelihood and the livelihood of his progeny up to the Day of Resurrection.'

He said: 'In the place in the mud where Adam's head had been God caused palm-trees, grapes, fig-trees and olive-trees to grow. So when Adam descended after nine months and his belly was empty, he sought for something to eat. God then placed food in those trees and the palm-trees. This was the first nourishment God bestowed on Adam through means of sustenance, and these trees bore fruit in this short period of time—with God's permission.'

I asked: 'Is the *ḥadīth*: "Honor your paternal aunts, the palm-trees, for they were created from the clay of Adam", authentic or not?'<sup>4</sup>

(263) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'This doesn't belong to the words of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is what the *ḥadīth* memorizers say, men such as Ibn Ḥajar, al-Zarkashī, al-Suyūṭī, and others as well.

And I asked him: 'Did God create other trees for him besides these four that were mentioned?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Every tree mentioned in the awesome Qur'ān such as the palm-tree, grapes, the fig-tree, the olive-tree and the pomegranate, and everything that's mentioned by name in the Qur'ān, God created from this dust. But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Among all the beings God created there's none that has a more handsome physique

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4 See p. 189.

than the offspring of Adam. The bodies of the offspring of Adam are the most handsome among the bodies of creatures and likewise the most excellent, the most refined and the most upright. If an intelligent person reflects on the divisions in a human being's body, the structure of its parts, the ordering of its joints and its veins, and the beauties that God's fashioning includes both in the body's exterior and its interior, he'll be astonished and realize the awesomeness of the One Who created it and shaped it.'

I asked: 'In what way is it superior to an angel's body?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It has assembled in it created things that haven't been assembled in an angel's body. And everything in an angel's body is in a human body and even more. Indeed, an angel's body consists of light and in that light reason has been installed. This and nothing else is contained in an angel's body. The human body, on the other hand, includes that light, reason and the spirit, as well as kinds of earth, fire, wind and water. And in each one of these is a secret that God has decreed—He is mighty and glorious! Gathering them together in one body strengthens the secrets found in that body.

In brief, the human body contains a number of created things. No other body is (265) like that. Thus the human body is the strongest of bodies. That's why it's been able to support secrets that the body of an angel can't support. And that's why our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was formed in conformity with it. Surely, he's the strongest of created beings with regard to bearing the Lordly secrets—God's blessings and peace be upon him! If there were a body stronger than the human body, the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—would have been formed in conformity with it.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him—about the human body being the strongest and the most handsome of bodies is what the imam al-Qushayrī also indicates in *al-Taḥbīr fī sharḥ asmā<sup>3</sup> allāh al-ḥusnā*.<sup>5</sup> Consult this book. But what our Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—goes into greater detail than he does. What I've recorded is only a small part. Most of it remained as his spoken word—God be pleased with him!

Next he said—God be pleased with him: 'Despite the human body being the most handsome of bodies, it occurred in God's pre-eternal knowledge—He is mighty and exalted—that He would place one

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<sup>5</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 149, CXXX; he died 465/1072; cf. *Taḥbīr*, pp. 36 f.



group of them in Paradise and another group in Hell-fire. This was because their deeper insights (*baṣā'ir*) were veiled from Him—He is exalted! Firstly, He placed in that body the spirit and its secret which is the reason, and then awareness of God the Sublime and the light of belief in Him, along with divine vision (*mushāhada*). Then He removed the veil—He is mighty and exalted—from between Himself and the body. The body acquired knowledge of its creator in the most complete manner. Secondly, when God the Sublime wished to carry out His threat, He placed the veil over that body. Then divine vision that was in it disappeared and it experienced estrangement. Would that when the body experienced estrangement, it hadn't become attached to anything! That would have been better for it than what happened to it. For the body looked at the thread of the light of reason that remained in it and became attached to it and made it its prop and its support in everything. This increased its estrangement because the body looked at reason as if it came from itself, as if it originated with the body, and it depended on reason in all its affairs. Thus reason increased the body's self-reliance and its separation from God—He is mighty and glorious! If the body had considered reason as coming from God—He is mighty and glorious—and that it's God the Sublime Who instigates it at every instant, this would have comprised the body's return to God—(266) He is exalted—and the divine vision that disappeared would have recurred. In sum, the body was cut off from the eternal and in its perception attached itself to the contingent. If it hadn't attached itself to anything, this would have been better for it.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Since the body became attached to its reason with regard to its planning and relied on reason in the matter of its livelihood and its social relations, and since God—He is exalted—knew that the body would necessarily swerve from the path, He sent it apostles to lead it back to the path of knowledge of God the Sublime. Then what happened in pre-eternity was made manifest. One group responded and another group expressed denial. In the response of the first group there was some retreat from adhering to reason, whereas in the denial of the second group there was extreme attachment to reason and complete adherence to it.'

Then I asked: 'What's the veil that's been imposed so that divine vision has disappeared? Is it the blood—which is the cause of heedlessness—or something else?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s something else, namely a darkness from the darkness of Hell that the body is wrapped in. This veils the body from truth and knowing the truth.’

And I asked: ‘What’s the relation between darkness and the blood?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘There’s no relation between them except that the blood increases separation from God the Sublime in the bondsman and that increases the veil.’ Then he formulated a similitude about how the blood causes distance [between man and God]: ‘A man had a small child who was as dear to him in his love and affection as his own two eyes. The child then came to suffer harm in the form of smallpox (*ḥabb al-baysh*).<sup>6</sup> It covered his face and his whole body. Now his father feels pity for him and is worried about him. The child’s affliction is a great concern to him. He [not only] doesn’t shun him but his love for the child is so strong he doesn’t find the illness ugly. You see him kissing the child and he breathes in his odor despite the sickness. He does this because of the connection that exists between himself and the child. If we supposed the child was foreign and remote from him, (267) and that no relation of any kind existed between him and the child, he’d have stayed away from him and fled to the furthest place to avoid him completely.’ He said: ‘This is the similitude for blood in the believer and in the infidel.’

Then he said—God be pleased with him—about the group who responded to the apostles: ‘They’re divided into two categories. One category responds and they remain [on the level] of belief in the unseen without receiving illumination. These are the ordinary believers. And then one category responds and advances to illumination. Among them is someone who continues to receive illumination and among them is someone whose illumination halts. Those whose illumination continues go on forever receiving increase, while those whose illumination has halted remain forever in incompleteness.’

Next he formulated a similitude for illumination that comes to a halt and its incompleteness, and for illumination that continues and its persistence. He said—God be pleased with him: ‘It’s like two impoverished men. They go out to beg from a rich man. When they raise their hands to him and each one of them asks for a dirhem, each of them receives a dirhem. The one takes the dirhem and is content with it. But when the other receives a dirhem, he asks for more. The

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6 See p. 741, fn. 152.

rich man then gives him a *mawzūna*. Again he asks for more and the man gives him ten *mawzūnas*. He asks for still more and the man gives him a gold dinar. If we suppose this rich man is generous, and that his treasures don't become exhausted and don't diminish, and we suppose the beggar goes on forever asking for more, then his having a gift bestowed on him never ends. Now this is the situation of the Friends of God the Sublime who go on receiving illumination. At every instant they experience increase—forever and for all eternity—even when death comes over them. For they don't perceive it—God be pleased with them—because their minds, their spirits and their bodies are cut off from everything other than God the Sublime. Since death belongs to what is other than God, they have no awareness of it at all.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is close to what was said previously. Indeed, whoever's spirit is taken while he's engaged in the Eternal—He is exalted—doesn't die a usual death. So here's the remedy for death. Consult this point earlier in the book.<sup>7</sup> But God knows best!

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<sup>7</sup> See p. 569.

## CHAPTER NINE

Pp. 841-46. How did the philosophers of unbelief such as Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato and Galen obtain knowledge about the translunar world, since this is a purely supernatural form of knowledge? Answer: people of darkness are given illumination regarding the world and its ephemeral affairs. People of truth receive this first illumination and then a far greater second one.

Pp. 846-47. The story of Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ and the Jew.

P. 847. The origin of the sciences of philosophy and its judgements about the translunar world.

Pp. 847-50. The benefit of apostleship and prophethood is showing the way to God. People of truth say little about the future. To do so they must descend from their high degree. Ordinary people think any unveiling constitutes perfection. In associating with the Friend of God a person must give up the world and its tawdry glitter, otherwise the Friend will come to loathe him.

Pp. 850-51. The similitude of a potter who only loves the potter's craft. You must talk to him only of pottery. Then he may provide you with provisions from his storehouses.

Pp. 851-54. Al-Dabbāgh explains in what sense matters revealed through the first kind of illumination are false. The powers conferred on the people of darkness entail God's 'deceptive forbearance (*imlā'*)' and 'enticement to destruction (*istidrāj*)'. The small may be stronger than the great in beholding these events, as was the case with al-Khaḍīr and Moses. Moses' lack of knowledge indicates the utmost perfection. 'Is our lord al-Khaḍīr a prophet?'

Pp. 854-56. The sign that a bondsman has achieved beholding the Prophet in a waking state. Al-Dabbāgh can describe all the details of the Prophet's physical appearance. Beholding the Prophet is better than entering Paradise.

Pp. 856-58. The sign that a bondsman has attained vision of his Lord. Absence in beholding the True. Is it possible for the Friend of God to abandon ritual prayer?

Pp. 858-59. Someone who receives illumination is in danger of losing his mind. People have even died because of the shocking things illumination caused them to see.

Pp. 859-61. The difference between someone whose reason departed due to illumination and someone whose reason departed

due to another cause. The first case is that of a person who's absent in God. The insane, on the other hand, are people whose spirit has been cut off from beholding the Lofty Essence and their spirit sees the actions of its body. When the Anti-Christ comes forth, 'those drawn unto God' will acquire the power of free disposal and the Support will be from among them.

Pp. 861-62. Beholding the Prophet is better than entering Paradise, and being 'deprived' after receiving illumination is worse than Hell.

Pp. 862-65. The story of how al-Bannā came to Fez and received illumination from al-Dabbāgh without being his 'child' and while al-Dabbāgh was still alive.

Pp. 865-68. An explanation of al-Bannā's special case. Some aspects of spiritual inheritance. Stories illustrating the apparently unpredictable nature of 'inheritance'. Stories about deprivation after illumination.

Pp. 868-71. Illumination can occur with respect to each of the five senses. If 'the light of power' isn't present in the body, illumination can cause death or insanity. Sayyidī Maṣṣūr, who was a weaver, once wept because he felt he wasn't good for anything, not even weaving. He saw that God produces everything. At a later date al-Dabbāgh comments that Sayyidī Maṣṣūr had been beholding God in contingent things. He should have sought Him in that which is more (*al-ziyāda*).

P. 871. Al-Dabbāgh praises the greatness of Sayyidī ʿUmar al-Hawwārī and enumerates his virtues.

Pp. 871-72. Al-Dabbāgh praises the Friend of God who foresees a calamity but acts as if nothing is about to happen.

Pp. 872-73. The Support possesses three hundred and sixty-six bodies, whereas the Prophet possesses one hundred and twenty-four thousand bodies. People of the great illumination (*al-faṭḥ al-kabīr*) have had their former and their latter sins forgiven.

P. 873. Prayers of the knowers of God. Their spirit performs the ritual prayers inside their body, and prayers of the spirit are accepted.

Pp. 874-75. If God wishes someone evil, He causes him to halt at an early stage of illumination. The person may become a magician. Illumination is highly dangerous. Someone whose body isn't ready for it may become a Christian or a Jew because of what he sees. Some only receive illumination when they're about to depart from the world, or after they've been resurrected.

Pp. 875-76. Illumination involves something like a black snakeskin being removed from a person. One group of angels removes the snakeskin, another delivers the secret. If the heir isn't ready to receive his shaykh's secret at the time of the shaykh's demise, Gabriel keeps it as a trust until the novice's body can sustain it. Angels may appear to people other than prophets, even to non-Muslims.

### (272) CHAPTER NINE

On the difference between light-filled and gloom-laden illumination, and the division of light-filled illumination into the illumination of the people of perfection and that of someone inferior to this, as well as discussion of the difference between a person drawn unto God (*majdhūb*) and the fool, given that both have lost their reason—and other matters connected with those who've received illumination.

Know—and God give us both success herewith—that many matters to do with aspects of illumination have already been treated in the course of this blessed book. These matters appear within different chapters wherever they seemed to be relevant. Nor is it possible to go over them again in the present chapter for fear of repetitiveness and in view of their great quantity. You may consult them in their contexts, especially what we've written about God the Sublime's words: 'And when the angels said: "Oh Mary, God has chosen you and purified you. He has chosen you above all women"' (3/42), i.e. concerning what someone who's received illumination sees of the false, ephemeral, gloom-laden things and of the established, permanent, light-filled things, and further details on this subject. Consult this without fail!<sup>1</sup> The same pertains to what we've written about the case of someone who claims to have seen the Prophet in a waking state—God's blessings and peace be upon him! For this is especially valuable. And consult the second question at the beginning of Chapter Five,<sup>2</sup> as well as what we've written about the matter: 'This Qur'ān has been sent down upon seven letters', which is connected with the illumination of the people of perfection. However, our present purpose is to relate what hasn't previously been mentioned in connection with this subject. And so we say:

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1 See pp. 477 ff.

2 See pp. 617 ff.

(274) 'I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about what Socrates, Hippocrates, Plato, Galen<sup>3</sup> and the other sages and philosophers of unbelief relate regarding the translunar world, such as what they say about the celestial bodies and their motion, the position of their orbits, and their doctrine that the moon is in the first sphere, Mercury in the second, Venus in the third, the sun in the fourth, Mars in the fifth, Jupiter in the sixth, Saturn in the seventh, etc. On the basis of this they give judgements about conjunctions and matters to do with adjusting [a planet's] sphere. Where do they acquire this knowledge, given that it belongs to the purely supernatural? For it isn't something that can be grasped with the senses, nor through proofs in speculation. In this regard they rely on God the Sublime's revelation to certain of His prophets. Moreover, what's recounted concerning this about our lord Idrīs (Enoch)<sup>4</sup>—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—isn't sufficient [to explain] the elaborate details they mention. And the ascription to our lord Idrīs is a very distant one and multiple chains of transmission for it are necessarily lacking. Furthermore, a report about it based on single transmitters is of no use at all. For if the informant was one of the philosophers, they're people of unbelief. A report of a single informant is only accepted if he's known to be a trustworthy witness. If it comes from anyone else, there's no way to distinguish between the person's faith and his unbelief.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Verily, God the Sublime created truth and light, and He created people worthy of them. And He created darkness and the false, and He created people worthy of them. The people of darkness are given illumination regarding darkness and its knowledge and everything connected with it. The people of truth are given illumination regarding truth and its knowledge and everything connected with it. The truth is belief in God the Sublime, acknowledgement of His lordliness, and confirmation that He creates whatever He wishes and chooses, as well as belief in the prophets, the angels, and everything connected with His contentment—(275) He is exalted! Darkness is unbelief (*kufra*) and everything that cuts one off from God the Sublime. It consists of the world as well as ephemeral affairs and contingent events that occur in the world. As proof of this let the Prophet's

<sup>3</sup> Cf. Goldziher, 'Die Stellung der alten islamischen Orthodoxie', passim, and especially pp. 20 and 23.

<sup>4</sup> Idrīs is traditionally associated with the first form of certain kinds of crafts and techniques but this couldn't account for the impressive precise knowledge of the 'philosophers'. Cf. EQ, s.n. Idrīs.

curse upon it—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—suffice for you, where he says: “The world is cursed and what it contains is cursed except for the recollection of God and what pertains to that.”

And the truth is a light from among God’s lights—He is sublime and exalted—by means of which the bodies of the people of truth are given to drink, and the lights of divine insights then shine within their bodies. And the false is darkness by means of which the bodies of the people of falsehood are given to drink. Their minds then become black and their eyes are blind to the truth and their ears are deaf to hearing it; indeed it doesn’t occur in their minds nor does it enter their awareness. Truth with them is like something that has no existence and has never been heard of. Their indifference to the truth resembles intelligent people’s indifference to the sort of thing that has no existence, as just described. That’s why the people of falsehood receive illumination with regard to vision of the world, its heavens and its earth but they only behold ephemeral matters connected with contingent [celestial] bodies and their forms, as they mention in connection with the *iudicia astrorum* (*aḥkām al-nujūm*).<sup>5</sup> For instance that such-and-such a celestial body has its place in the such-and-such sphere, and that if such-and-such a celestial body comes into conjunction with it, this and that will happen.<sup>6</sup> And for instance, ascribing the Arabic language to the sign of Cancer and the language of the Persians to Mars, etc.<sup>7</sup>

As for the grave of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and the light that extends from it to the dome of Barzakh, and the bodies of the Friends and knowers of God the Sublime, and the spirits of the believers located in the courtyards of shrines, and the guardian angels who record [our deeds] and the angels who succeed one another within us,<sup>8</sup> and other things from the secrets of the True that lead to God the Sublime and that He placed on His earth—regarding knowledge of these matters they haven’t received illumination, nor has any of this occurred in their minds because God the Sublime has given them darkness to drink and cut them off entirely from knowledge of Himself. Thus if the liar in question were to look at a tablet that had the word of God written on it—He is mighty and glorious—which is light and healing

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<sup>5</sup> Radtke, ‘Stellung’, p. 260.

<sup>6</sup> From: ‘I questioned him ...about what Socrates...’ cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 137, l. -15 to p. 138, l. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Not mentioned in the *Picatrix*.

<sup>8</sup> For an idea of some of the intimate activities of angels with regard to human beings see, for instance, p. 142.



for what's contained in breasts, he'd see with his darkened, cut-off insight the body of the tablet without the recorded letters of the precious Qur'ān. In this way the people of darkness don't see any of the secrets of the True—He is exalted—that He's placed in His heavens and they don't see any of the angels and don't hear their glorification of God, and they don't see Paradise, the Pen, the Tablet and the lights of the letters that emerge from the Pen. Similarly, they don't know the True—He is exalted—Who's their creator. (276) In short, the True—He is exalted—has veiled them from Himself and from everything that leads to Him. He's conferred illumination on them regarding other things that cause them harm and don't profit them.<sup>9</sup>

So the reports of the philosophers—God curse them—about the translunar world come forth from this river bed, and every judgement they've made on those other matters is erroneous, since they ascribe them to [the influence of] the celestial bodies. In fact, the one who does [all] this is God the Sublime Who's the creator of the celestial bodies. That's why the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said when reporting from his Lord—He is mighty and glorious: "Among My bondsmen are those who believe in Me and those who deny Me. As for he who said: 'We've been given rain by the bounty of God and by His mercy', that person believes in Me and doesn't believe in the stars. But as for someone who said: 'We've been given rain solely through a storm', that person denies Me and believes in the stars."

.....

As for the philosophers—God curse them—the True has veiled them from knowledge of Himself—He is exalted—and attached their minds to the stars in order to keep them busy with this until His threat [of Hell] is carried out in their case. And even though the connection they mention regarding the *iudicia astrorum* is due to His action—He is blessed and sublime—only some of it takes place. They're actually wrong about a great deal of it.

As for the people of truth, they experience a first and a second illumination. Now the first illumination consists of everything in the previous illumination that the people of darkness receive concerning this world, its heavens and its earth. The one who receives this illumination sees the seven earths and what they contain, and the seven heavens and what they contain. He sees the actions of the

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<sup>9</sup> From: 'As for the grave of the Prophet...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 138, ll. 7 to -10.

bondsmen in their houses and palaces. He doesn't see this with his eyes but he sees it with his deeper vision (*baṣīra*) which isn't veiled by a curtain and isn't stopped by a wall. Likewise, he sees future affairs, such as what will happen in such-and-such a month and in such-and-such a year. These persons and the people of darkness are on the same level as far as this illumination. Therefore it's said: "Unveiling (*kashf*) is the weakest degree of Friendship with God"—because it occurs among the people of truth as well as among the people of falsehood. And the possessor of this illumination (277) isn't safe from being cut off and joined to the people of darkness, until he traverses this halting-station and passes beyond it.<sup>10</sup>

As for the second illumination, this consists of his receiving illumination with regard to vision of God's secrets that the people of darkness are veiled from. He beholds the Friends who are knowers of God the Sublime and he speaks with them and has intimate conversation with them, while being at a great distance from them—the intimate conversation of one person who sits with another. Likewise, he beholds the spirits of the believers above the graves and the noble recording angels and the other angels, as well as Barzakh and the spirits of the dead that are in Barzakh. And he beholds the tomb of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the column of light that extends from it up to the dome of Barzakh. When he experiences beholding the person of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—in a waking state, he acquires protection from Satan's deceitful play because of having encountered God the Sublime's mercy which is our lord, our Prophet and our master Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Furthermore, his encounter with the noble personage (*al-dhāt al-sharīfa*) is a cause for his knowing the True—He is exalted—and his beholding the pre-eternal Essence (*al-dhāt al-azaliyya*) because he finds the noble personage "absent" in the True and enraptured in beholding Him—He is exalted—and the Friend of God, by means of the noble personage's blessing, doesn't cease to be attached to the True—He is exalted—and stage by stage advances in his knowledge until he acquires divine vision, the secrets of knowledge and the lights of love. So this second illumination is what separates the people of truth and the people of falsehood.

As for the first illumination, the same way it occurs to them [the people of truth], it occurs to the people of darkness. The latter experience illumination with regard to beholding ephemeral matters

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<sup>10</sup> From: 'As for the people of truth...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 138, ll. -9 to -5.

and they become endowed with the power of free disposal (*taṣarruf*) over them. You see the liar walk on the sea, fly in the air, and have sustenance conferred on him from the Unseen. Yet he's among those who don't believe in God—He is mighty and glorious! This is because God the Sublime created light and from light He created the angels and made them into helpers for the people of light by means of conferring success, giving guidance and performing miracles. Likewise, He created darkness and from darkness He created the satans and made them into helpers for the people of falsehood by means of enticement to destruction, increase in loss and empowerment to perform miracles.'

.....

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This is the sense of the story of the Jew who was in a boat with Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ<sup>11</sup>—God be pleased with him! They became acquainted with one another and were intimate companions, and the Jew said to him: (277) "If you're sincere in your religion, walk on this sea. For my part I can walk on it." And the Jew got up and walked on the water. Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ said: "What humiliation if the Jew prevails over me!" And he then threw himself upon the water. God—He is mighty and glorious—gave him assistance and he walked [on the water] just as the Jew did. Then they came forth from the sea and the Jew said to Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ: "I want to keep company with you while travelling." Ibrāhīm replied: "You may do so." And the Jew said: "On condition that you don't enter mosques because I don't like them, and that we don't enter synagogues because you don't like them, and we don't enter a city lest people say: 'A Muslim and a Jew have become companions!' But we'll roam about in the deserts and the wastelands, and we won't take any provisions." Ibrāhīm replied: "That's acceptable." And so they went forth into the open country. They then remained three days without tasting any food. While they were sitting, behold a dog approached the Jew and in its mouth there were three flat-breads. The dog set them before the Jew and departed.

Ibrāhīm has related: "He didn't invite me to eat with him and so I went hungry. Then a youth who was the most handsome of youths, the sweetest smelling, with the most beautiful face and most agreeable appearance came to me, and in his hand was food the likes of which has never been seen, and he set it down before me. I invited the Jew to eat with me but he refused, and I ate. Next the Jew said:

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<sup>11</sup> Gramlich, *Sendschreiben*, pp. 82 f., no. 43; died 291/904.

‘Oh Ibrāhīm, verily our religion and your religion are true. Each of them leads to God and contains benefit. But your religion is more affable and tender, more splendid and more handsome. How would it be if I adopted it?’” Ibrāhīm related: “He became a Muslim and was one of our companions who attained the reality of Sufism.”

This is how Abū Nu‘aym recounts the story in the *Hilya* in the biography of Ibrāhīm al-Khawwāṣ. <sup>12</sup>

And I questioned our Shaykh about this—God be pleased with him—and he replied: ‘May the house of their father be desolate! Satans made fun of them. Meanwhile, they thought there was benefit in their worship in accordance with their religion.’ Then he repeated what he said previously, what the circumstances of the people of truth and what the circumstances of the people of falsehood are. Nor is there anything for a person to seek beyond this. But God knows best!

.....

(279) And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘As for the origin of the sciences of philosophy and the basis of its judgements about the translunar world and such things, it’s related that there was a man in the time of our lord Abraham—the most excellent blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—and he believed in Abraham and began to listen to him about matters connected with illumination concerning the realm of the heavens and the earth. This was his constant practice until he too received illumination and he halted at what he beheld of the world. He was cut off from the True—He is exalted—and he forfeited this world and the world to come. He began to be delighted with what he beheld in the translunar world and he mentioned the places of the celestial bodies and determined the *iudicia astrorum* by means of them. And he renounced the religion of Abraham. Those whose destruction God wished accepted this from him until [this knowledge] reached the cursed philosophers.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘God’s wrath became very intense toward that man because he led people to other than God and whoever leads to other than God is someone who cuts people off from God the Sublime.’

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He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The benefit of apostleship and prophethood consists of a single characteristic which is showing the way to God—He is mighty and glorious—and gathering people

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<sup>12</sup> *Hilya* X, pp. 329 f.; see ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 150, CXXXI; Abū Nu‘aym died 430/1038.

unto Him. Thus, if we assume an impossible assumption with regard to a personage who's ordered to undertake apostleship and prophethood but who then shows the way to something other than God the Sublime or gathers people unto himself and cuts them off from the True—He is exalted—that personage would become like the description we just gave of the man [in the time of Abraham]. We've mentioned this impossible assumption in an exaggerated form in order to deter anyone from showing the way to something other than God the Sublime.'

Then he said—God be pleased with him—and we were walking over a bridge on the Bāb al-Ḥadīd, one of the gates of Fez—God protect the city through His favor: 'What's the benefit of this bridge?' I replied: 'Walking on it so as to escape from the abyss beneath it. Walking across it fulfills its purpose on earth.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'If this benefit were removed from it, it would be sheer loss for the people.' I replied: 'Yes, so it would.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'It's the same with the prophets, the dispatched apostles, the angels close to God and all God's upright bondsmen. Their benefit consists in showing the way to God and gathering people unto Him. If this benefit were removed from them, they could rightly be described like the bridge was just described. But God knows best!'

(280) He said—God be pleased with him: 'When asked about the matter of future events, the perfect among the people of truth only say very little about them. This is because that was the first thing they beheld. And afterwards they beheld the truth and understood the futility of what they first saw. So they dislike it and dislike talking about it. And this is also because the world and the events that occur in it are detested by God the Sublime, and they detest whatever God detests—He is exalted! And then the only way they can speak about these things is by descending from their degree, like someone who descends from the Pleiades (*al-thurayyā*) to the ground (*al-tharā*). The degree of these events is the degree of the illumination of the people of darkness. Likewise, they only see—God be pleased with them—with the light of the True—He is exalted—and time and its ordering are suspended in the light of the True. There's no past, no present and no future in that light. For the most part what the Friend of God knows through the light of the True is that such-and-such an event will happen without any doubt. But that it's going to happen on this or that day is only known to him if he descends to considering time and its ordering. But for the Friends this belongs to darkness in comparison with the light of the

True. If a Friend did this, it would be like the sun descending from its sky to the earth and putting a pair of glasses before its eyes and seeing with them.'

Then I said: 'The True—He is exalted—knows what's going to happen and in what order, and He knows what's in the past, what's in the present and what's in the future. Now the Friend of God sees with His light, so he should also know those things without having to descend to the degree of darkness.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'God knows that because God the Sublime embraces everything in His knowledge. But the Lord—He is exalted—is omnipotent, whereas the bondsman is weak. The bondsman's knowledge is restricted.'

In short, the bondsman can't be compared with his Lord—He is blessed and exalted! And our lord al-Khaḍir said to our lord Moses—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon them: "Compared with God's knowledge the smallness of my knowledge and your knowledge is surely like the smallness of the sparrow's sip of water from the sea."

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Friend of God may say something about future events and report on them (281) by descending from his degree. This is no sin but it's a shortcoming in his higher aspiration and a descent from his lofty degree and bad manners if this is compared with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—because the Prophet—blessings and peace be upon him—didn't behave like that. None the less, a great many perfect Friends of God—God be pleased with them—do talk about future events because they're overwhelmed by predestination and God's free disposal over them—He is exalted—for whatever He wishes. After all, the Friends are God's places of manifestation—God be pleased with them!'

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I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that most harm which people undergo with regard to recognizing the Friends of God and associating with them occurs in this area. As regards recognition, they don't distinguish between the illumination of the people of darkness and the illumination of the people of truth. They think everything that increases their knowledge in the way of unveilings and is outside their capacity in the way of miracles constitutes perfection and truth, and indicates Friendship from God the Sublime in whomever it appears. And there's one group of people who believe in the Friendship with God of someone who experiences unveilings and they believe he's the ultimate degree. And another group believes in

the Friendship with God of someone who to outward appearances is upright and who perseveres in fasting and nocturnal vigils, even if his interior is devoid of God and attached to other than Him.

As for associating [with them], after God the Sublime has given the bondsman success in meeting a perfect Friend of God, it may be that what the bondsman wishes from the Friend is the opposite of what the Friend wants. What the Friend wants is to have the bondsman come to know his Lord, and to warn him of hindrances, the greatest of them being love of the world and attachment to its tawdry glitter. If the bondsman just requests that he fulfill his needs and desires day after day, year after year, and doesn't ask him about his Lord and how he can know Him, the Friend will hate him and loathe him. On the other hand, he'll be safe if he manages to escape misfortune, though it could strike for different reasons. One reason is that his love of the Friend isn't for the sake of God—He is mighty and glorious—but is wavering. Love that wavers is clear loss. It's accompanied by misgivings and satans attend upon it, and the light of God will never descend on it. A second reason is that the Friend of God considers him to be in the essence of estrangement due to his worldly attachments and wants to save him from them. But the bondsman wants him to increase it for him. A third reason is that if the Friend agrees to fulfill some of his desires and confronts him with some unveilings, the wretched bondsman falls into error. He thinks (282) this is what one should seek from the Friend of God. But all this is error and wickedness.

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And I heard our Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'The Friend of God can be compared to a man whose work is making pottery. The man activates his hand in this and his bodily limbs work at it. At the same time, he possesses storehouses containing food and other things that the people need. But though he owns storehouses, his heart turns away from them and he pays them no attention. They have no value for him. All he likes to talk about is pottery-making and the potter's craft. He strongly dislikes anyone who talks to him about anything else. Indeed, he detests him so much that the person who talks this way fears he'll suffer harm from the man in question. So if two men come to him and they know his situation and his loathing to talk about anything but pottery-making and they want something from his storehouses, the one who's blessed with success and intelligent speaks to him about producing pottery. He asks him about the craft of pottery and how he works. He continues like this until he wins immense love from the man and great affection. If after

that he asks him for something from the storehouses, the man will provide him with it, and he'll suffer no harm. The one who isn't blessed with success comes to the man and straightway asks him for something from the storehouses and talks to him about them. He's lucky if he gets away without the man hitting him over the head with a pot, and his only profit will be to come away without injury. Now the Friend of God is like this. He has no craft and no profession other than knowledge of God and what leads to Him. And he only likes to talk about this and only likes to be gathered unto Him and to reach Him and to be close to Him. Whoever knows he's like this wins from him this world and the world to come. Whoever knows him some other way experiences the opposite.'

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And I asked him—God be pleased with him—why the events in question were false, since these were confirmed matters that were directly seen and perceived by the senses. The false is something that has no basis to it.

He replied—God be pleased with him—and at the same time he pointed at a wall: 'Don't we behold this, and yet it perishes and disappears? And don't we behold its Lord Who's created it and Who grasps it in His omnipotence, Who lives forever and isn't extinguished and doesn't die? He's closer to us than our jugular vein. And He's created us and exercises free disposal over us as He wishes. Thus beholding this wall that causes no benefit and causes no harm, without beholding God the Sublime, is a false vision. The falsehood it contains is relative. That is to say, what we've seen is (283) as nothingness compared with what we haven't seen. It was mentioned earlier that beholding the tablet without seeing the letters written on it was a false vision, and that whomever God the Sublime shows mercy receives illumination and beholds His lofty essence, His radiant attributes and His pure actions. He becomes attached to His Lord and then lives a life after which he isn't wretched and doesn't die. For when the ephemeral is attached to the Eternal, it persists in His permanence—as has previously been stated.<sup>13</sup> But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Now if the first illumination is something the people of darkness and the people of truth have in common, still the purpose of it is different. Seeking it on the part of the people of darkness entails their being driven from God the Sublime's door and their straying from His path, because

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<sup>13</sup> See p. 569.



God the Sublime loathes them and cuts them off from Himself and attaches their hearts to other than Himself. He provides them with these miracles by way of deceptive forbearance (*imlāʿ*) and enticement to destruction (*istidrāj*) so that they think they're engaged in something important.

As for seeking it on the part of the people of truth, this is so it increases their love and that He causes them to advance from degree to degree. God the Sublime has opened the door for them. He's removed the veil from them, attached their hearts to Himself, and provided them with these miracles so their deeper vision is strengthened and their divine knowledge is confirmed. Thus God the Sublime has said: "As for those who believe, them it has increased in their belief, and they are joyful. But as for those in whose hearts there is sickness, them it has increased in abomination after abomination, and they have died while they were unbelievers" (9/124).'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The small may well be stronger than the great in beholding these events. For the great is absent from the events in what's stronger than them, namely beholding the True—He is exalted! This is in contrast to the small. The latter seeks them because they're the object of his vision. Even if he did experience a vision of the True—He is exalted—it wouldn't be like the vision of the great. In short, the great is strong in beholding the True—He is exalted—and weak in beholding the created realm. With the small it's the opposite. He's strong in beholding the created realm and weak in beholding the True—He is exalted!

Such is the meaning of what occurred between our lord al-Khaḍīr and our lord Moses—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon them—as God the Sublime related in His precious Book concerning the matter of the ship, the young man and the wall.<sup>14</sup> Knowledge of this was absent from our lord Moses—peace be upon him—because he was engaged in vision of what's stronger than it, namely God the Sublime. But Moses' lack (284) of knowledge about this—peace be upon him—indicates the utmost perfection.'

He said: 'His relation to al-Khaḍīr in this regard is like the two bondsmen's relation with the king. As for the one, the king joined him to himself and made him his companion. His only activity was

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<sup>14</sup> The Qurʾān (18/60-85) tells how Moses is shocked that al-Khaḍīr sinks a ship they're travelling in, kills an apparently innocent young man, and repairs a wall without being paid a wage. Al-Khaḍīr eventually reveals hidden reasons for his behavior, reasons that Moses had no knowledge of; see also p. 660.

to stand before the king and to gaze at his face. When the king went out, he went out with him. And when the king came in, he came in with him. When the king ate, he ate with him and when the king drank, he drank with him. When the king spoke, he spoke with him. As for the other bondsman, the king gave him the power of free disposal over his subjects. He carried out the king's command among them and spoke with them regarding their affairs and what would cause their circumstances to flourish. Sometimes he was absent from the king for a long period in order to carry out certain affairs.

Here there's no doubt that the first bondsman was closer to the king and more familiar with the secrets of the king's person than was the second, even though if he were questioned about some matter to do with the subjects, what entered among them and what emerged from them, and especially if the subjects were distant from the king's city, then he certainly didn't know about it the way the second bondsman did.—Now this is how the relation of Moses was with God the Sublime. Moses was like the first bondsman, and our lord al-Khaḍir was like the second bondsman. But our lord Moses is unquestionably greater than him in rank because he's an apostle of God, God's interlocutor and His bosom friend.'

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Then I asked: 'Is our lord al-Khaḍir a prophet? Some religious scholars have maintained this and the *hāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar in his *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* even says: "One must believe in his prophethood lest someone other than a prophet be considered more knowledgeable than a prophet."'<sup>15</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'He isn't a prophet, but he's a bondsman whom God has honored with His knowledge and provided with the power of free disposal over His subjects. God has bestowed on him all the power of free disposal and the complete knowledge that He bestows on the Support (*al-ghawth*) in this Muḥammadan community. Moreover, al-Khaḍir attained this without a shaykh and without travelling the path. Instead, God the Sublime provided him with this right from the beginning. So that's his degree and it doesn't reach the degree of prophethood and apostleship. Nor is there anything in what was just mentioned about al-Khaḍir's knowledge regarding those matters Moses didn't know which requires that a non-prophet was more knowledgeable than a prophet. Such is the case because of what was previously explained,

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<sup>15</sup> Probably *Faṭḥ* IX, p. 335.

namely that Moses—peace be upon him—was distracted from it by the vision of God, and for this there's no equivalent and no equal. Hence there's no need to believe al-Khaḍir is a prophet.'

Then I said: 'Those who maintain he's a prophet use in their argumentation the words of God—He is blessed and sublime: "I did it not of my own bidding. This is the interpretation of what you were unable to bear patiently" (18/82).'

(285) He replied—God be pleased with him: 'No Support and Pivot, nor others who possess the power of free disposal, do anything or exercise the power of free disposal over any event except through God's command, and that isn't prophethood, nor is it apostleship. But most people don't understand this.' Then he explained this with precious words I've omitted to record because they concern hidden secrets which mustn't be written down. God be pleased with our Shaykh! How knowledgeable he is with regard to God!

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that the answer our Shaykh presented—God be pleased with him—concerning our lord Moses' lack of knowledge about these matters, and the explanation of the secret that's behind it, are among the secrets and the lights whose knowledge causes one to rejoice. And there are stories that took place between certain perfect men and their novices which illustrate this. Indeed, a perfect man may well learn something from his novice about what occurs in the world. Thus one of the great men said about a novice he had: 'Since So-and-so died, we've been without reports about the heavens', until another novice succeeded him and began to inform him the way the first one had done. Then that perfect Friend of God said: 'What we missed has returned to us.' I've omitted to name the perfect man and his two novices since our purpose has no connection with that. But God knows best!

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'Everything has its sign<sup>16</sup> and the sign that the bondsman has achieved beholding the Prophet in a waking state—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is that his thought is continually occupied with this noble Prophet such that the Prophet is never absent from his thought. No distractions or preoccupations take the bondsman's attention away from him. You see him eating, and his thought is with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And if you see him

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<sup>16</sup> From: 'Everything has its sign...' cited in *Rimāḥ* I, p. 200, ll. 7 ff.

drinking, he's like that; and when he quarrels, he's like that; and when he sleeps, he's like that.'

I asked: 'Does this happen because of a stratagem and effort on the bondsman's part?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'No. For if this happened because of a stratagem and an effort on the bondsman's part, he'd become negligent of it once a distraction arrived or a preoccupation occurred. But it's something from God the Sublime which conveys the bondsman to it and makes use of him in it. The bondsman doesn't feel that he has any choice in it himself. Even if the bondsman were given the task of warding it off, he couldn't do so. That's why distractions and preoccupations don't drive it away. The interior of the bondsman (286) is with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and his exterior is with the people. He speaks with them with no intention, he eats with no intention, and he approaches everything he sees in his exterior without an intention, because what's of importance is in the heart and his heart is with someone other than them. If the bondsman continues like this for some time, God the Sublime will bestow on him vision of His noble Prophet and His great Apostle in a waking state. The period of this contemplation varies. For one person it's a month, for another it's less and for another longer.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is a momentous affair and an awesome matter. If it weren't that God the Sublime strengthened the bondsman, he wouldn't be able to support it. If we were to suppose a huge, powerful man who combined the strength of forty men, each of them able to take hold of the ear of a lion with courage and audacity, and if we were to suppose that the Prophet emerged from somewhere before this man, the man's liver would burst, his body would dissolve and his spirit would come forth, due to the awesomeness of the Prophet's power—God's blessings and peace be upon him!

Despite this awesome power, the noble vision in question entails pleasure which is beyond description and any reckoning. According to those who've experienced it, it's better than entering Paradise. This is so because whoever enters Paradise isn't given all the delights that Paradise contains. Instead, every person has his own particular delight. It's otherwise with beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! If someone experiences the said vision, his body is given to drink all the delights of the dwellers in Paradise. He feels pleasure of every sort and sweetness of every

variety, just like the dwellers in Paradise experience it in Paradise. And this is paltry with respect to someone whose light Paradise was created from—God bless and grant him salvation, and God honor and revere him, glorify and extol him, as well as his family and Companions!’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘In every vision this [experience of] being given to drink takes place, and anyone whose vision persists, for him this [experience of] being given to drink also persists.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that I was looking in the *Shamāʿil* of the imam al-Tirmidhī<sup>17</sup>—God have mercy on him—and in the commentaries on it. When they were at variance concerning something such as his complexion—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—or his height or the length of his hair or his way of walking or anything else to do with his circumstances, I’d go to our Shaykh—God be pleased with him—and ask him about the reality of the matter. He’d give me an answer like that of someone who sees directly and witnesses [the situation]. Some of this I’ve recorded at the end of Chapter One.<sup>18</sup> But God knows best!

What was wondrous in his affair—God be pleased with him—is that I’d ask him about these matters while he was busy trimming the trees—God be pleased with him—and pruning whatever it wasn’t good to let remain on them. He’d do this in the manner (287) of someone shunning my question and turning his attention to something else. But no sooner would I finish posing a question about something he said earlier than he’d give a rapid reply without reflecting on my words, thereby confirming what he’d said previously, namely: ‘What’s important is in the interior, and everything he does outwardly is without intention.’ Trimming the trees and suchlike was done by him—God be pleased with him—without any intention, while his interior was with the Lofty Presence. For this reason he didn’t reflect before giving his answer. But God knows best!

.....

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The sign of the bondsman having attained the vision of his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—is that after beholding the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—attachment to his Lord occurs in his thought such that his thought is absent in this, just like the previous absence in the

<sup>17</sup> ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 150, CXXXII; Abū ʿĪsā al-Tirmidhī died 279/892; the Prophet’s hair: *Shamāʿil*, p. 20; his way of walking: *ibid.*, p. 48; and see here p. 396, fn. 345.

<sup>18</sup> See pp. 395-400.

Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And the bondsman continues this way until he experiences illumination with regard to beholding the True—He is exalted—and it occurs as a benefit of the heart (*fu'ād*) and a result of thought. Now if his body is given to drink all the varieties of pleasure of the dwellers in Paradise upon his beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—what do you think he experiences upon beholding the True—He is sublime and exalted—Who's the creator of the Prophet and the creator of Paradise and every single thing?

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Then after illumination people are divided into two categories with regard to beholding the True—He is sublime! One category is absent from everything but Him while beholding the True—He is sublime! As for the other category, who are the more perfect, their spirits are absent in beholding the True—He is sublime—while their bodies remain in beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The vision of their spirits doesn't prevail over the vision of their bodies, nor does the vision of their bodies prevail over the vision of their spirits.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This category is more perfect because their vision with regard to the True—He is exalted—is more perfect than the vision of the first category. And their vision with regard to the True—He is exalted—is more perfect because they aren't cut off from the vision of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—which is the cause of ascent in the vision of the True—He is exalted! Whoever has increase in beholding him—blessings and peace be upon him—is given increase in beholding the True—He is exalted—and whoever receives less vision of the Prophet, receives less vision of God.'

He said: 'Even if the bondsman had free choice and he lived to be ninety for instance, during that whole period his choice would be to behold only the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Then one day before his death he'd receive illumination with regard to beholding the True—He is exalted—and during that day because of his steadfastness in beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he'd experience more illumination (288) with regard to beholding the True—He is exalted—than the person who received illumination with regard to the two visions together during that period from its beginning to its end.'

Then he placed a pair of [reading] glasses before his eyes—God be pleased with him—and began to look at letters [of the alphabet]. He said: 'Doesn't what appears among the letters and their clarity to the

sight depend on the clarity of the glasses and their purity?' I replied: 'Yes, it does.' Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'Now beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is like the glasses, and beholding the True—He is exalted—is like the letters. On the basis of the degree of clarity in the vision of the Prophet, clarity occurs and the clouds disappear in the vision of the pre-eternal Essence.'

I heard these words from him—God be pleased with him—when one of the honored jurists had asked him: 'Is it possible for the Friend of God to abandon ritual prayer?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'It isn't possible for the Friend of God to abandon ritual prayer. How could this be possible since he's continually burning in two flames? His body burns in the flame of beholding the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and his spirit burns in the flame of beholding the True—He is exalted! And both of the visions command him to perform the prayers and other things from the secrets of the *sharī'a*.'

And another time he said—God be pleased with him: 'How could the Friend of God abandon ritual prayer? He only obtained the good he obtained in the two visions after his body had been given to drink the secrets of the Prophet's body—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and how could a body be given to drink the secrets of the noble body and yet not perform what the noble body performs? This simply isn't so.'

Then—God be pleased with him—I heard him say things about beholding the True—He is exalted—and seeing by means of the light of God the Sublime, and the removal of time through this vision such that there's no past, present and future, and what it's like to behold the Lofty Essence and His splendid attributes, and how the body is given to drink the lights of the [divine] names, and the division of the degrees of Friendship with God in accordance with the number of the names, and about the spirit's illumination, and about other secrets as well—such things as direct expression (*'ibāra*) is unable to encompass and allusion (*ishāra*) is incapable of communicating. But God knows best!

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(289) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If God the Sublime wishes to have mercy on His bondsman and transfers him from the state of being veiled to the state of illumination, fear for his sake comes over the Friends of God—God be pleased with them—since they don't know whether he'll die through the illumination because of not being able to support it or whether he won't die. And

if he doesn't die, whether he'll be deprived of his reason or whether his reason will remain with him. The meaning of being deprived of reason is that reason departs with the awesome things it sees and is completely cut off from the body and doesn't return to it. The meaning of his not being deprived of reason is that some of his light departs with what he saw but some of it remains with the body and preserves its food and drink for it, and how the body puts on its clothes and how it looks after its interests.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And no one other than his shaykh knows how the affair of someone whom God shows mercy will turn out.'

I asked: 'Why does someone who receives illumination experience coming forth from his [inner] center so that he dies or his reason disappears?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'When the bondsman is given illumination, he beholds things from the world of the angels, the Jinn and the satans that can't be supported, and he sees shocking images and hears frightful sounds that cause the liver to burst.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'How many a man is in his shop selling things and God confers illumination on him and he sees what can't be supported and immediately dies! The people think he died suddenly without any cause. But he died from illumination.'

And one time he related to us—God be pleased with him—that while he was walking in the Druggists' Market<sup>19</sup> in Fez, he looked into the shop of a man who sold henna. God then conferred illumination on the man and he immediately fell down unconscious and died. The people thought he'd died suddenly but he died in a state of Friendship with God.

.....

I then asked: 'What's the difference between someone whose reason departed because of illumination and someone whose reason departed due to another cause?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'As for someone whose reason departed because of illumination, in reality his reason hasn't departed. He's actually absent in beholding the True—He is exalted—and is continually swimming in the seas of that vision. But God the Sublime has separated his reason from his body for some wise purpose which He wishes. As for someone whose reason has departed due to another cause, this is because when God the Sublime

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<sup>19</sup> Druggists' Market: Sūq al-<sup>ʿ</sup>aṭṭārīn, located in the vicinity of the shrine of Mawlāy Idrīs; not mentioned in *Le Tourneau, Fès*.



wishes someone's destruction and the removal of his reason—we beseech God for protection from this—He cuts off his spirit from beholding His Lofty Essence for one (290) or two moments and has it behold the actions of the body it's in. No sooner has the spirit completed a moment beholding these wicked actions issuing from the sinful bondsman than a state of constriction comes over it and reason disappears because of this—we beseech God for protection! As long as that state of constriction persists in the spirit, reason continues to be absent. If the constriction ceases, expansiveness and friendliness come over the spirit, and it returns to beholding the Lofty Essence the way it had done before. A person's reason then returns to him.'

And I said: 'A minor who hasn't yet reached puberty may lose his reason. How can his actions be wicked or how can he be a sinner?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'All the circumstances of the bondsman are sins as far as the spirit is concerned because its vision and what it knows of the True—He is exalted—demand that the bondsman prostrate himself before God continually and never lift up his head. From the viewpoint of the spirit, there's no minor and no adult in this regard.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for someone who's received illumination, if two persons who've lost their reason sit down with him, and one is a Friend of God and the other isn't, and they begin to talk, he's able to distinguish which of the two is the Friend by his speech, because even if the Friend doesn't know what he's saying, he may still reveal secrets from among the secrets of the True—He is exalted—which the masters of secrets recognize upon hearing them. It's otherwise with the one who isn't a Friend of God. Nothing like this is ever heard from him. And he distinguishes the Friend among the two of them by means of something else as well, namely he sees that his spirit is always expansive and filled with joy and happiness. And he sees that the spirit in the other person is like the spirit of a constricted man who's self-absorbed with lowered head and pondering something that's afflicted him and made him sad and worried.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Those who've lost their reason other than by means of illumination are the equivalent of animals, except that God the Sublime will have mercy on them and admit them into Paradise because their human form will intercede for them, as if they were animals that were given the form of Adam's offspring. God the Sublime will have mercy on them

because of the noble form according to which He formed His prophets and His apostles and His intimate friends—blessings and peace be upon them—so they won't become dust like the animals.'

(291) He said—God be pleased with him: 'As for those who've lost their reason by means of illumination, they're among the noble Friends of God, except that they don't possess the power of free disposal along with the Friends of God. Nor does a Support or Pivot emerge from them, until God the Sublime wishes the Anti-Christ (al-Dajjāl) to come forth. Then God will bestow the power of free disposal on this group, and the Support will be from among them. The state of affairs will become corrupted and order will break down. And during the period of their power of free disposal the Anti-Christ will emerge. But when his affair comes to an end, their ascendancy will also end and it will never return to them again. But God knows best!'

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The shaykh Sayyidī °Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī asked me: "Do you know something in the world that's better than entering Paradise, and something in the world that's worse than entering Hell?"

I replied: "I know what you've asked me about. As for what's more excellent and more precious than entering Paradise, it's beholding in a waking state the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the Friend of God sees him today just as the Companions—God be pleased with them—saw him. And this is more excellent than Paradise. As for what's worse than Hell, it's to be deprived after having received illumination.'" He said—God be pleased with him: 'No sooner had I uttered these words than the shaykh Sayyidī °Abd Allāh threw himself down at my feet and began kissing them with many kisses. I asked him: "What's the reason for these kisses?" He replied: "I've put this question to some eighty shaykhs and not one of them gave an answer like yours."'

I [al-Lamaʿī] asked: 'So Sayyidī °Abd Allāh knew the answer but his purpose was to test the intelligence of the person he put the question to?' He replied: 'Yes. He knew the answer but his posing the question was a test, as you say.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that seeing the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is better than Paradise for the reasons previously explained.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> See p. 855.

Then I asked the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘Why is deprivation [after receiving illumination] worse than Hell?’

(292) He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘This is with respect to someone endowed with permanent illumination, in the sense that he considers the deprivation that removes his illumination as worse than Hell—not with respect to the deprived person after deprivation—God protect us from this! For after deprivation his heart turns into a stone and doesn’t see and understand anything of what preceded. It’s as if he’d never seen anything at all and his wicked body finds relief and lightness from the weight of illumination on it.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Someone who’s been stripped of his military command in the world is better off as to his situation than this deprived person—we seek refuge with God from such an eventuality! The man endowed with military command recalls in his thought all the delights he experienced and he finds pleasure in this even if only through remembering them. For the other deprived person it’s different. His heart is obliterated and the sun of his deeper vision is eclipsed. But God knows best!’

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘For fourteen years Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Bannā,<sup>21</sup> who was from Ṭarābulus, went on seeking someone who’d direct him to God—He is mighty and glorious! There was no place he didn’t visit. He entered Egypt, Syria, Iraq, and Constantinople, as well as the land of India. Every Friend of God he heard about he went to see. He went to those who are famous among the people and reputed for Friendship with God yet he didn’t find anything with them. In fact, he’d heard the truth from his father who was one of the knowers of God. But when he experienced no illumination at his hand, he set out to seek a knower of God who’d direct him to God—He is mighty and glorious!’

Then he sought on the basis of deeper vision and didn’t concern himself with reputation and fame. He related that he met a man in Iraq whom crowds gathered around, crowds too numerous to be counted. He had a hospice (*zāwiya*) for people who came and went, and in it around two hundred *mudds*<sup>22</sup> of food were distributed every day due to the multitude of visitors. In his hospice he’d withdraw in seclusion (*khalwa*) for worship, bowing and prostration, and he only came out of retreat during the final three days of the month. As for the other twenty-seven days, he was only engaged in bowing and

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<sup>21</sup> Unidentified.

<sup>22</sup> A *mudd*=12.5 kilos; see Cigar, p. 271.

prostration. In the retreat there was a window through which the intendant (*naqīb*) provided him with the food he ate. Inside the retreat they'd installed a privy and a place for purification, and on his behalf they'd provided the retreat with everything he needed so he didn't have to come out. Thus he remained in his retreat for the said amount of time. When the time was up, he'd come forth for the three days mentioned and speak with the visitors about their needs, in the order that each person presented himself, until he finished with them all. Once the three days had elapsed and the new moon appeared, he'd return to his retreat and remain there for another twenty-seven days. This was his practice (293) at all times.

[Muḥammad al-Bannā related:] "When I heard about him, I set out to visit him. I waited patiently until he came forth and spoke with those who were ahead of me. Then when it was my turn, he said to me: 'What's your wish?' I replied: 'Oh Sayyidī, I'd like to ask you two questions. One has to do with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and the other with the Lord of glory—He is exalted!' He said: 'Go ahead!' Then I said: 'God the Sublime declares: "We have given you a manifest victory (*fath*) so that God may forgive you your former and your latter sins" (48/1-2). Thus the Qur'ānic verse affirms earlier and later sin, and states that the forgiveness comprises both together and includes them all. But the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—was protected from sin (*ma'ṣūm*) both before and after prophethood. He never committed any sins. How is this to be understood in view of the honorable Qur'ānic verse?"

He replied: 'Of the sins we commit some are weighty and some are light. The weighty ones are like fornication and wine-drinking, and things of this kind don't issue from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! The light ones are like his being inclined to one of his wives and giving preference to one of them above another in apportioning things, and light sins of this nature. These did issue from him and are the former and the latter sins that are forgiven in the Qur'ānic verse.'"

Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Bannā said: "Then I knew he was ignorant of the Prophet's station—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And a knower of God isn't ignorant of the nobility of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and of his protection from sin, be they small sins or great ones. This is so because sins only issue from the veiled, i.e. the people of heedlessness and darkness. Sins don't issue from the knowers of God, i.e. the people of divine closeness and vision (*mushāhada*). So how do matters stand with the

prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—? And how is it with the lord of existence—the most excellent blessings and the purest peace be upon him—?”

Next he said: “As for the second question, I asked: ‘God the Sublime has said: “And He is with you wherever you may be” (57/4) but what’s meant by this togetherness?’

The shaykh from Iraq replied: ‘The persons meant are the believers. God the Sublime is in the hearts of the believers. They beseech Him and recollect Him continually and worship Him.’ I then understood he was ignorant of his Lord—He is mighty and glorious—and that he was among the liars.”

Sayyidī Muḥammad al-Bannā said: “I went to a man in the region of India. I’d been told about his worship and his renunciation of the world that exceeded all limits. I came before him and I found him to be as they described him with regard to his worship and worldly renunciation. There’s a food [in India] which resembles the acorn among us, and he went so far that he only ate one of these during a night and day, and so he’d spend his night and day and eat no more than the amount of one acorn. I questioned him about God—(294) He is mighty and glorious—and I found him to be in extreme ignorance concerning Him. I then knew that he’d built without a foundation.”

Al-Bannā said: “One day I was on the shore of one of the oceans and this was an ocean that was adjacent to a certain city. Ships came there with merchandise and people on foot came forth to carry the merchandise to the city on their backs and were paid a wage. I began to look at them and I found that they carried amounts of merchandise beyond what’s usual like the fellaheen in Egypt do and the Zarzāya<sup>23</sup> in Fez. So I was just beginning to be amazed by this when one of them approached me and he was from among the knowers of God—He is mighty and glorious! Before I knew it, he revealed through clairvoyance what was in my thoughts, saying: ‘Don’t be amazed by this but be amazed by God’s omnipotence which will become manifest in me.’ Then off he went with his load. But it wasn’t long before he returned and he then stretched out, extending his arms and legs, and his spirit departed from him—God be pleased with him! Thus he indicated that in reality the strong one is God the Sublime Who’s the Possessor of capability and powers which He bestows on whomever He wishes—He is exalted—and removes from whomever He wishes. It’s His omnipotence that one should be amazed by, and

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23 Zarzāya: see Colin, *Dictionnaire* III, p. 703 bot.

one should consider great the awesomeness of His power. ‘So blessed be God, the best of creators!’ (23/14).”

Al-Bannā said: “And I met a group of knowers of God and everyone of them indicated to me that I should return to my country and that what I wished for was there. So then I went back to my country.”

Our Shaykh said—God be pleased with him: ‘In his country he met someone who informed him that what he wished for was in Fez. He set out travelling and arrived with a caravan. Then he met someone [i.e. al-Dabbāgh] by whose hand God confers illumination. He resided in the city of Fez for six months and became one of the knowers of God and a member of the Dīwān—God be pleased with them!’

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I said to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘He was given illumination while you were still in life—God be pleased with you—but a Friend of God doesn’t receive illumination during the lifetime of his “father” because illumination only descends upon the secret of the body. Thus when the secret of the body is transferred to the child, he receives illumination. But as long as the shaykh is alive, the secret of the body isn’t transferred to anyone and illumination doesn’t take place. If it does take place, it isn’t firmly established but it quickly disappears. On the other hand, this man received illumination during your lifetime—God be pleased with you—and his illumination is permanent.’

Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘He isn’t my child but he’s other people’s property.’<sup>24</sup>

(295) Then I asked: ‘And who are the people that had the property before him?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘A man in the region of Marrakesh. He was one of the knowers of God—He is mighty and glorious—and he died. His secret then remained with me. But when this man arrived, I dressed him in a shirt I was wearing and I bestowed that secret upon him.’

Then I said: ‘The secret in question can only be firmly established for this man after the transference to him of the secret of the first person’s body. But he never met him. So how can the illumination be permanent?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘God the Sublime provides with the secrets of the first body the one with whom He deposits the

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<sup>24</sup> The precise sense of this sentence and the one that follows is unclear.

secret. He in turn bestows them on the second person. Then he provides him with the secret and illumination. But despite this, he doesn't stand in relation to him [as father] to child. The one who stands in relation to him [as father] to child is the one from whose body he took the secrets after him.'

And I asked: 'The man inherited from was in the area of Marrakesh and his heir was from the people of Ṭarābulus. So has the good been cut off from the people of the Maghrib such that this man outstripped them in attaining the secret and snatched it?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'A body doesn't inherit another body unless it's similar to it in mind, nature and blood. Sayyidī So-and-so used to say: "If [inheritance] were based on proximity, it would go to my son. If it were based on power, it would go to the sultan. And if it were based on service, it would go to So-and-so my servant. But it's based on agreement of mind with mind, nature with nature, and blood with blood. Now these are matters that can't be acquired by effort and work. And this man was similar to the person he inherited from in the things mentioned. But God knows best!'

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If you've heard the knower of God frequently declare: "So-and-so is my heir. He's the possessor of my secret. After me be attached to him", know that most of the time it isn't like this, because these are Lordly secrets and they only arrive in a way people don't expect. Indeed, the shaykhs attained them while they were thought to be unworthy of them by the people. This is the way things turn out.'

Then he related a story about eight persons serving a shaykh they'd adopted who was cognizant of God—He is mighty and glorious! Seven of them continued in service and the eighth was weak. He turned out to be incapable. (296) Wherever the shaykh sent him, he didn't achieve anything useful. And three devoted themselves fully to service and persisted in this. They exceeded the other four and each of them gave his daughter to the shaykh in marriage. The daughter of one of them was outstanding in beauty and of superior loveliness and perfection. The shaykh now busied himself with him and spoke with him. He gave him preference above all of them in his speech and in everything. The people had no doubt that he was his heir. Then when the shaykh's death drew near and his disciples and everyone who was connected with him were present, he called for the previously mentioned weak person and said

to him: 'You're the possessor of the secret.' And the shaykh's soul came forth and departed from the world.

He said: 'God's mercy and consideration for someone who's viewed in the people's eyes with the eye of contempt is greater than His mercy and consideration for someone who's viewed in the people's eyes with the eye of splendor. That's why persons exposed to contempt are more worthy of the secrets. But God knows best!'

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'There was a Friend among the Friends of God the Sublime who had two novices, one of them from the common people, the other a *sharīf*. Neither of them had received illumination. The Friend of God said to the common novice: "Go to the *sharīf* and tell him to sell you the secret and illumination." So this common person went to him and told him: "Sell me illumination and the secret for a hundred dinars." He replied: "No." The common person said: "I'll give you an additional hundred dinars as well." But the *sharīf* said: "No." The common man said: "I'll also give you a servant woman I have." The *sharīf* said: "No." The common man said: "I'll give you my daughter and marry her to you." The *sharīf* said: "No." The ordinary man said: "I'll give you my house as well." Then the *sharīf* said: "Now I accept." The common man said: "And I too accept."

Both of them were veiled, not knowing anything about the secrets of illumination. For his part, the ordinary man did this out of his sheer faith in the shaykh's words. The common man then said to the *sharīf*: "We'll bring witnesses for you." The *sharīf* said: "Yes." The common fellow then brought the witnesses. He recounted to them what he'd given to the *sharīf* and said: "Bear witness to this for me." The *sharīf* said: "As for me, bear witness that I've given him illumination and the secret."

Thereupon the daughter went to the *sharīf* and he took possession of the house and the servant woman and received the two hundred dinars. And in his mind he spent the best of nights. During his life he'd never spent a happier night than this one. As for the common man, he went through the night warding off doubts that might cause him to have a bad opinion of his shaykh's affair. Never in his life had he spent a more gloom-laden night than this one.

Then when dawn rose, illumination and the secret came over the *sharīf* so that he beheld it and in it he saw what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has never occurred in a human being's heart. When his seeing this was complete and he'd delved it to the full, he was deprived of it—God protect us from this—and the illumination



went to that common man and he became one of the Friends of God—He is mighty and glorious!

As for the *sharīf* who'd sold [illumination and the secret], he derived no benefit from anything (297) he acquired and that was because when he experienced deprivation, his reason left him. All that remained on his tongue were the words: "Where are you? Take the house, take the servant woman, take the dinars, take your daughter. And I'll add my mother for you!" After this affair his life continued for sixty years or so but he remained in this state of being deprived of his reason. We beseech God for protection from such an eventuality!

Then al-Dabbāgh was asked: 'Oh Sayyidī, he lost this world and the world to come?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Who led you to believe that? He lost the secret. We're not talking about anything else.'

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'I know a man who's been deprived of his reason. The only thing he does is toss a stone into the air and position his head so the stone stamps a mark on it. I've known him to be this way for a long time but I didn't know any reason for this behavior. Then I learned the cause for it which is as follows. The man used to repair worn-out shoes. His shop was in °Aqabat al-Raṣīf.<sup>25</sup> Then one of the Friends of God the Sublime met him and said to him: "My son, I want you to buy me a new hat. Take these dirhems and buy me a new hat with them." And he didn't know the Friend of God. The man took the dirhems and the Friend waited for him. The man bought a hat and he was bringing it to the Friend of God. However, while en route, by way of seduction, his carnal soul said to him: "This man who gave you the dirhems to buy him a hat is a fool. How could he trust you with this without even knowing you? Wear the hat yourself and don't go back to him."

He dressed himself in the hat and removed a worn out cap he had on his head. This he sold for almost two *mawzūnas* and went back to his shop to work. When the Friend realized he'd betrayed him and cheated him, he left the matter until the next day. He then went to his shop. Catching him by surprise, he snatched the hat from the deceiver's head and said to him: "Look at what you've lost from God—He is mighty and glorious!" And at that he ran from his presence. The deceiver looked after him and experienced illumination. He saw what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and

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25 See p. 134, fn. 79; and cf. Le Tourneau, *Fès*, index, s.v. *Rṣīf*.

what has never occurred in any human being's heart. But when he directed his eyes back to his shop, he experienced being deprived—God protect us from such an eventuality! He realized that this calamity had befallen him because of his head and so he then began to practice that action on his head. He lost his reason and has continued like this, repeating the same action up till now.'

That is to say, he's still alive and (298) one time the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—pointed him out to me. He said: 'This is the man in the story.' And I saw he was just as the Shaykh had described—God be pleased with him! But God knows best!

.....

And I questioned him about the secret that the Sufis (*al-qawm*) refer to and he replied by formulating the following similitude: 'Gold is with the king and he doesn't give it to everyone. He only gives it to people with a special quality among his subjects.' He said: 'It's the same with the secret. God the Sublime only gives it to chosen ones from among His creation.'

I asked: 'And is that illumination?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Illumination is something additional which the secret is strengthened with. An illuminated person receives illumination in his sight and by means of it he sees the heavens and the earths, and he receives illumination in his sense of hearing and by means of it he hears a bird that flutters its wing in the sky's atmosphere and an ant when it moves its leg a year's distance away. He receives illumination in his sense of smell and smells the scent of the soil, and every soil has its own scent, and smells the scent of water, the scent of bodies and the scent of spirits, the scent of living bodies and the scent of defunct bodies, and the scents of all things. He receives illumination in his sense of taste and tastes all the previous things, without coming into contact with any flavors. In the same way he receives illumination in his sense of touch. He experiences illumination in his hearing as well, without sounds mingling together for him. Hearing one thing doesn't distract him from hearing something else so that he understands and hears at one and the same time what thousands of people say. And if the referred to secret occurs with illumination, two powers and endeavors are united together, whereas if the secret occurs by itself with veiling, it may be the secret but its possessor isn't strengthened with the power of someone who receives illumination.'

And I asked: 'What thing occurs in the body when the secret occurs in it without illumination?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Something similar to the qualities of the True—He is exalted—occurs in it, and you see that the body’s nature is stamped with the truth. It knows only the truth and speaks only the truth, while being characterized by lofty attributes and virtuous traits of forgiveness, clemency and pardoning, modesty and nobility, and other pure traits and pleasing characteristics. If illumination is then added to this secret, what was just mentioned about the two powers will occur. But God knows best!’

(299) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘If illumination descends upon the body before the light of power, defect and weakness will occur in the body and will lead to a death as described earlier<sup>26</sup> or the disappearance of reason. But if the light of power first descends upon the body, the light of illumination will then descend after it and the body won’t suffer harm because of illumination.’

I asked: ‘What’s this power?’

He replied—God be pleased with him—and he looked at a weak blade of grass: ‘If God provided this weak blade of grass with the power we’re talking about, it would be able to carry that mountain.’ And he pointed to a mountain that was in front of us. ‘A person whom God has given success asks God the Sublime to make the light of power descend on him before the light of illumination descends on him. But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘At the beginning of my affair I entered before Sayyidi Maṣṣūr and he was a weaver’—that is to say he practiced the craft of weaving flax—‘and I found him weeping. I asked him: “What’s causing you to weep?” He said: “What thing am I good for? I now see the action of God the Sublime in the case of weaving. I used to think I produced something but behold, He, not I, produces it.”’ Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘I didn’t know what to say to him. If it were today, I’d know what to tell him.’

I asked: ‘What would you tell him?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘I’d tell him: “Seek God in something more (*al-ziyāda*).<sup>27</sup> At present you’re engaged in

<sup>26</sup> See p. 859.

<sup>27</sup> ‘...and with Us there is yet more’ (50/35). Perhaps *al-ziyāda* alludes to what will be experienced in the highest Paradise (*dār al-mazīd*) where the only pleasure is beholding God. Cf. a bawdy misogynist anecdote in Aflākī’s *Manāqib al-‘arīfīn* that plays with the same Qur’ānic verse: in the life of Mawlānā Jalāl al-Dīn’s grandson, ‘Arif, Chpt. VIII, [94].

beholding contingent things. For His actions—He is sublime—are among His contingent created things.”

And I asked: ‘Did Sayyidī Maṣṣūr advance from this situation?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘He died in this situation—God have mercy on him! But God knows best!’

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘If people knew the qualities of Sayyidī ‘Umar [al-Hawwārī]’—i.e. his shaykh—‘they wouldn’t pay visits of respect to anyone else among the living like Sayyidī So-and-so and Sayyidī So-and-so. He possessed four qualities which are scarcely found in anyone else. The first is that he didn’t talk about anyone. You never heard him say anything bad about someone, neither in secret nor in public. The second is retirement. All his life he was withdrawn in [the shrine] of Sayyidī ‘Alī b. Ḥirzihim, continually reciting the *Dalā’il al-khayrāt* or his prayer-beads. He never let up at this and wouldn’t return home until close to sunset. If there were numerous visitors, he’d leave the *rawḍa*<sup>28</sup> and go to the consecrated lote-tree that was opposite the gate of the *rawḍa*. He’d cut himself off from the people and attend to his own affair. The third is (300) lack of interest in superficial things. He didn’t attribute anything small or large to himself so that everyone who visited the shrine of Sayyidī ‘Alī b. Ḥirzihim, and especially those who spent every Thursday night there, didn’t think he contained anything at all of the secret in him. When they came to visit Sayyidī ‘Alī and he was present and they sought the *Fātiḥa*, they sought it from Sayyidī ‘Alī and he accompanied them in this. They never sought the *Fātiḥa* or anything else from him. The fourth is renunciation of the world. From the time I associated with him I saw him appear in the morning in the shrine of Sayyidī ‘Alī and he didn’t bring anything with him, not even a piece of bread. If something arrived [as a donation] in Sayyidī ‘Alī’s shrine, he’d eat of it whatever was to hand. Otherwise, he went hungry throughout his day. If he found a piece of bread, I used to see him take some oil from the sayyid [‘Alī’s shrine] and add salt to it and then because of that it was acceptable. If he didn’t find some oil, he’d soak it in water and eat it. But God knows best!’

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘There’s a characteristic among the Friends of God that if the people were familiar with and if they knew the repose it contains, they’d pay

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<sup>28</sup> Cf. p. 129, fn. 56.

everything they possess [for it]. As long as a particular calamity hasn't befallen a Friend of God, he's unconcerned with it and his state isn't troubled because of it. Even if he suspects or is sure that it's about to befall him in an hour or less, the event is like something non-existent in his sight and he has no awareness of it at all. You see that he observes what will take place in the future, yet he eats and drinks, laughs and sleeps with his wife, like an ignorant person who has no deeper vision whatsoever and possesses no knowledge of what's about to happen directly. This is because they know—God be pleased with them—that no one can thoroughly comprehend the action of God the Sublime. He carries out in His free disposal—He is exalted—what they don't suspect will be and severs from His action—He is exalted—what they see as taking place. They behold His absolute power of free disposal that isn't subject to limits of any kind whatsoever. In this characteristic is found an indescribable repose. Now if this is the state of the Friend of God who's received illumination and who beholds matters and their occurrence, then what should the state of someone who's veiled be like? He himself is also obliged to follow the path of the Friend of God and to cast cares from his heart and to be relieved of the worry of planning (*tadbīr*) and false calculation along with the lack of benefit in his planning. But God knows best!

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the Friend of God who possesses three hundred and sixty-six bodies.

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'He's the perfect heir, that is to say the Support and no one else.'

Then I said: 'The one from whom—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he's inherited from possesses one hundred and twenty-four thousand bodies. Why is it that the Support doesn't inherit all of them?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'No one can sustain what the Prophet sustains—God's blessings and peace be upon him!' He said—God be pleased with him: 'The meaning of inheritance in the case of the Support is that there's no body which has drunk from the body of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—more than his body. But God knows best!'

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The people of the great illumination (*al-faṭḥ al-kabīr*) have had their former and their latter sins forgiven, and their good deeds have been accepted, whereas all their bad deeds have become good deeds if they did them before illumination. As for after illumination, sin doesn't come forth from them because it only comes forth from those who are

veiled. For their part, they're engaged in beholding the True continually and beholding the True hinders one from sin. That's why the angels: "Do not disobey God in what He commands them and do what they are commanded" (66/6). But God knows best!

.....

Then I questioned him—God be pleased with him—about the ritual prayers of the knowers of God—God be pleased with them! I asked: 'What are their prayers like?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'If a Friend says: "*Allāhu akbar!*" and performs prayer with this external body, the spirit's body performs prayer with him inside his body. The spirit bows in his bowing and prostrates itself in his prostration.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Then I started to look at the spirit and at the external body to see which one is closer to the earth. I wished to verify which of them was the closer. But then the guardian angel forbade me to do this. In any case, the ritual prayers of the spirit are accepted.'

I asked: 'Is that because the prayers are invisible and hypocrisy doesn't enter into them?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'No, but rather because they're the truth from the truth to the truth. The visible prayers have only (302) been prescribed because of the inability of most people to perform the prayers of the spirit. As for the knowers of God—God be pleased with them—though they perform the ritual prayers with their spirits, they also perform the prayers with their bodies because this is customary and in order to preserve the external appearance of the *sharī'a*.'

Then he formulated a similitude involving someone who practiced the craft of tailoring in order to use it as a means to learn the craft of silk-working. God then conferred illumination on him with regard to working silk without a shaykh and without any apprenticeship at all. But he remained unknown among the tailors. And let's suppose they have their own dress, customs and affairs for which they're known and which are current in their external appearances. But this man, who received illumination regarding the working of silk, abandoned their dress, and they questioned him about this. He replied: "Because I've become a silk-worker." It had occurred in God's knowledge in pre-eternity that he'd receive illumination in this regard and he'd surpass them in a particular knowledge which wouldn't appear until the Day of Resurrection. Yet it's proper for this man to follow the customary practice of the tailors and to adopt their dress and to remain as he'd been at first. But God knows best!'

.....  
 And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about a certain person from among the people of the tenth century.<sup>29</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘He received illumination and his state halted where it was and then he became one of the magicians.’

I asked: ‘How did that happen?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘When the bondsman first receives illumination, he sees the sins of fellow bondsmen and the causes of the sins and how they’ve fallen into them, as well as the gloom-laden mist which the people of darkness draw assistance from—God protect us from it—and other such things. Then if God wishes evil for the possessor of illumination, his reason becomes fixed on this and makes his thought persist in it. If for a single moment his thought halts in this, he’s cut off. We beseech God for protection from such an eventuality! All that remains in his sight is what was previously mentioned concerning illumination and what was mentioned is the encampment of satans and the location of their tempting the offspring of Adam. Thus the place where he appears and the place the satans appear become one and the same. They come to be with him hand in hand. Magic is made subservient to him and he becomes one of the magicians. But if God wishes good for the possessor of illumination, He opens up for him something that distracts his thought from what was just described. And so He continues to make him advance every instant, on and on without end. But God knows best!’

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The matter of illumination is wondrous and its whole affair is a marvel.<sup>30</sup> How many a bondsman of God whom God loved—He is sublime and exalted—has been hindered by God from receiving illumination as a mercy unto him! This is because there are things in illumination that if someone who receives illumination beholds before his body is ripe and has arrived, he immediately becomes a Christian because of them. God protect us from this! And there are things in illumination that if he beholds, he becomes a Jew because of them. (303) God protect us from this! And how many a man only receives illumination when his spirit is on the point of departing! And how many a man dies without having received illumination and God resurrects him in a state more perfect and greater than the state of

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<sup>29</sup> The tenth century of the *hijra* corresponds for the most part to the sixteenth century AD.

<sup>30</sup> From this sentence on cited in *Rimāḥ* II, p. 44, ll. -5 ff.

someone with illumination!’ And one time he said to a certain friend: ‘This is the great load that they kept stored in this coffer.’ And he was referring to the above thought.

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—to this friend: ‘You possess imposing and prodigious good deeds. When I saw them, I envied you because of them.’ And one time he said to him: ‘Is it possible for you to share your good deeds with me? Really, I can’t help being amazed by them and by their awesomeness.’

.....

And he used to say—God be pleased with him: ‘At the time of his being given illumination something resembling a black snakeskin is removed from the person who receives illumination. This is darkness which encompasses the entire body. If that snakeskin disappears, the light of illumination is poured over the body. This is a huge tumult which some angels of God’s choosing bring about. Another group of them is engaged in the removal of the snakeskin. And the angels bring the secret. The instant the snakeskin disappears, the angels place the light in the body. At the time of the snakeskin’s disappearance the people are greatly alarmed on behalf of the person who’s received illumination because they don’t know how his affair will turn out, whether he’ll die or lose his mind or whether he’ll be safe. They go on relentlessly beseeching God the Sublime to bestow on him the strength, the support and the success to bear what’s been conferred on him.’

And he used to say—God be pleased with him: ‘The light of illumination is in the body of the shaykh. If at the end of his life his heir has the capacity for it, he receives it after the shaykh has departed from this world. If he doesn’t have the capacity for it, it remains as a trust with our lord Gabriel—the most excellent blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—until the body of the novice can sustain it and his snakeskin disappears and he receives the secret.’

And he used to say—God be pleased with him: ‘Our lord Gabriel—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—three days before the illumination becomes a friend to the person who’s going to receive illumination and keeps company with him by way of love for the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and guides him along the path.’ And he related other such secrets as well—God be pleased with him—concerning illumination. And be on guard not to think that in mentioning our lord Gabriel—blessings and peace be upon our Prophet and upon him—there’s any estrangement here as our lords the jurists say—God be pleased with



them! They severely reproach whoever claims to have beheld angels. But another group of jurists has refuted them in this regard—God be pleased with them—maintaining there's nothing impossible in it and no rivalry in it as far as the Prophet's noble, lofty (304) and splendid eminence. And they confirm it with the story of the great Companion of glory and renown Sayyidī ʿImrān b. Ḥuṣayn al-Khuzāʿī<sup>31</sup>—God be pleased with him! He said that he used to see the angels and they used to greet him. But then when he had his wounds cauterized, they withdrew from him.

The shaykh al-Shaʿrānī—God have mercy on him—in his book the *Minan*<sup>32</sup> counts it an awesome kindness that God brought him together with someone who beheld Gabriel and spoke to him. If those who are uninformed would refrain from talking about things they aren't proficient in, great knowledge and much good would come forth for the people. Would that I might know what the person who denies this has to say about the authentic, accepted reports that al-Bukhārī and others have published which make clear the occurrence of this in communities other than the Muslim community! How then can he deny this when it comes to this honored community? Consult the reports on the Israelites in al-Bukhārī's *Ṣaḥīḥ* and elsewhere. But God the Sublime knows best!

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Now the time has come for us to tell about certain luminous matters that still remain which the person who receives the great illumination beholds, such as Barzakh, Paradise and Hell-fire, the scales, the narrow street (*ṣirāṭ*) and the water basin, the spirits and the angels, as well as the guardian angels, the Friends of God and other things besides. And so we say:

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<sup>31</sup> *Usd al-ghāba* IV, p. 281, no. 4042; Gramlich, *Wunder*, p. 425.

<sup>32</sup> This is al-Shaʿrānī's autobiography; cf. Winter, *Society*, p. 7.

## CHAPTER TEN

[1] Pp. 878-79. Barzakh is narrow at its lowest point and becomes wider as it rises upward. On its top is a huge dome. Its foundation is in the lowest heaven and it then extends upward through all seven heavens and beyond. The Well-appointed House.

[2] Pp. 879-80. The Well-appointed House is normally conceived of as being in the seventh heaven. This is because people restrict themselves to the area where the noble dome is located. The dome is where the Prophet and those close to him reside. Barzakh is made up of holes that contain the spirits.

[3] Pp. 880-81. The position of spirits in Barzakh was determined on the day of: 'Am I not your Lord?' (7/172). Final outcomes and the diversity in the ranks of the spirits were then revealed. The people of felicity responded with joy, whereas the people of wretchedness replied begrudgingly. Once the last of the spirits in Barzakh has descended into the world, the Resurrection will take place.

[4] Pp. 881-82. The Prophet as well as the Support and the seven Pivots know when 'the final hour' will arrive. Barzakh's light gradually began to multiply after the spirits of Adam and the prophets and Friends of God among his offspring ascended to Barzakh. The spirits of the infidels reside in the lower levels of Barzakh where it's as black as charcoal.

[5] P. 883. Different amounts of sweat occur in the hereafter. There are date-palm branches in Barzakh that protrude and extend all the way to Hell. Others extend to Paradise. The spirits that live within them experience the characteristics of Hell or of Paradise. The martyrs, for instance, reside in the date-palm branches that extend to Paradise.

[6] Pp. 883-87. The Qur'ān says the gates of heaven are closed to infidels but the bottom of Barzakh is located in the lowest heaven. Scholars say that the believers' part of Barzakh extends from their graves to the summit of the Loftiest Heights (*'illiyyūn*), whereas the infidels' part descends from their graves down to Sijjīn, the lowest reaches of the world. Al-Dabbāgh gives various explanations that attempt to accommodate contradictory views about Barzakh.

[7] Pp. 887-90. Threads of light extend from Barzakh to Paradise and threads of darkness extend from Barzakh to Hell. Similarly, in

the world believers and infidels are endowed with such threads. Someone with deeper vision (*baṣīra*) can see the threads extending from a person's head. The light involved is the light of faith. A dark blue thread, depending on its thickness, signals the degree of unbelief in a person. But even among the dark threads emerging from the heads of Jews there are little white threads indicating that some Jews will transfer to the religion of Muḥammad. Examples of al-Dabbāgh's witnessing people's light or dark threads.

[8] Pp. 890-91. Al-Lamaṭī gives an example of how individuals who have a blue thread can change by associating with the people of felicity, i.e. those destined for Paradise. This is the secret behind the Prophet's command to adhere to the Community (*al-jamā'a*).

[9] Pp. 891-92. Al-Dabbāgh talks about the column of light that extends from a Friend of God's grave upward to his spirit in Barzakh. It's the same with the column of light that emanates from the Prophet's grave.

[10] P. 892. Higher parts of Barzakh are dressed in the lights of the believers' spirits. Even the light of the sun comes from this light. The bottom of Barzakh is black. The celestial bodies opposite it receive no light from it. Though the astrologers claim the fixed stars are located in the eighth heaven, i.e. the sphere of the fixed stars, al-Dabbāgh asserts that all the stars are located in the lower heaven.

### (307) CHAPTER TEN

On Barzakh—its description and how the spirits come to reside in it.

[1]

I heard the Shaykh say about Barzakh—God be pleased with him: 'It has the form of a place which is narrow at its lowest point and then becomes wider as it rises upward. When it reaches its limit, it has a dome placed on its summit, like the dome of a lantern. Thus it's comparable to an enormous mortar made of wood. Its lowest part is narrow and as it rises, it gradually becomes wider. If you then place the dome of a lantern on its top, this is what the shape of Barzakh is like. As for its size and magnitude, Barzakh's foundation is located in the lowest heaven but from there it doesn't protrude into what borders on us. It then starts to rise upward until it penetrates the second heaven, and it rises until it penetrates the third, and it rises until it penetrates the fourth, and rises until it penetrates the fifth heaven, and rises until it penetrates the sixth, and rises until it penetrates the seventh heaven, and it keeps on rising until it

penetrates what's beyond any calculation. And its dome has been placed upon it. This is its length.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'And this is the Well-appointed House (*al-bayt al-ma'mūr*).'<sup>1</sup>

[2]

And I said: 'But the Well-appointed House is located in the seventh heaven. Barzakh's beginning is in the first heaven and then extends up to what's above the seventh heaven and what's beyond any calculation. So is the Well-appointed House in every heaven?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'People restrict themselves and only speak of what's above the seventh heaven because that's where the referred to dome is located. The dome is the most noble thing in Barzakh. For it only contains the spirit of the lord of the first and the last [of mankind]—the most excellent blessings and purest peace be upon him—and those whom God has honored through His generosity such as his chaste wives, his daughters and his progeny who lived in his time and whoever of his progeny following after him act in the truth up until the Day of Resurrection. Also in Barzakh are the spirits of the [first] four caliphs (308) as well as the martyrs who died in the presence of the Prophet during his era and who sacrificed themselves so that he might live and endure—God's blessings and peace be upon him! They possess a strength and endeavor which isn't found in anyone else. They're in Barzakh as a reward to them for the excellence of their good behavior—God be pleased with them!

Also in the dome are the spirits of his heirs—God's blessings and peace be upon him—from among the Friends of God the Sublime such as the Support and the Pivots—God be pleased with them one and all! And the most noble part of Barzakh is the restricted dome. For this reason those who restrict themselves [in their description of Barzakh] restrict themselves to the dome.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, have seen that the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar—God have mercy on him—mentions in the *Sharḥ al-Bukhārī* that the Well-appointed House is in each of the heavens. Consult him where he comments on the *ḥadīth* of Muḥammad's Night Journey (*al-isrā'*) in the chapter on ritual prayer (*al-ṣalāh*).<sup>2</sup> This he transmits from certain persons. However, it isn't found in all manuscripts of his work but only in some of them.<sup>3</sup> In any case, there's no problem with this.

<sup>1</sup> Qurʾān 52/4; *Weltgeschichte*, pp. 316 f.

<sup>2</sup> *Fatḥ* II, pp. 4 ff.

<sup>3</sup> An interesting remark about MSS of Ibn Ḥajar's *Fatḥ* indicating that their content might vary. Could this explain why at least some of al-Lamaṭī's references to the *Fatḥ* aren't found in the printed edition?

As for the breadth of Barzakh, it's sufficient for you if I say that the sun in the fourth heaven revolves around it in the manner of someone circumambulating it and only completes the circuit in one year. And the whole of Barzakh consists of holes as will be described in the description of Paradise<sup>4</sup>—if God is willing! Inside these holes are the spirits. As for the spirit of the lord of existence—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and whomever God has honored through His generosity as previously mentioned, they're also in the dome.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This dome is divided into seven parts, the same number as the parts of Paradise. And each of its parts resembles a garden from among Paradise's seven gardens.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And though the place of the Prophet's spirit—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is in the dome, his spirit doesn't stay there permanently since the dome, like all other created things, is unable to carry the noble spirit because of the multitude of secrets it contains. Only his pure body which is sinless and radiant—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has the capacity to carry the noble spirit. That's why his spirit—God's blessings and peace be upon him—doesn't reside in Barzakh in any fixed location. For there's nothing that can support it.

Now the spirits which are in Barzakh from the fourth heaven upward possess penetrating lights, whereas the people from the third heaven downward are mostly veiled and their spirits possess no light. And the holes that are in Barzakh were inhabited by the spirits before the creation of Adam and these spirits possessed lights, although they were lesser than the lights they possessed after separation from physical shapes.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Thus when Adam's spirit—peace be upon him—descended to his body, his place remained empty. In this way whenever a spirit descends, its hole remains empty of it. However, when the spirit returns to Barzakh after death, (309) it doesn't return to the [same] place it had been in previously. Instead, it occupies another place, one that it deserves.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would note that it's as if he means to say: 'Instead, the spirit merits a higher abode if it was a believer or a lower one if it was an infidel.'

[3]

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And the empty holes are filled with creatures from among God the Sublime's creatures.

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4 See pp. 900 ff.

Before [God's words]: "Am I not your Lord?" (7/172), the spirits didn't know the final outcomes and were ignorant of God the Sublime's intention toward them. Then when God the Sublime wished to show them what had occurred in His pre-eternal decree and His pre-eternity, He ordered Isrāfīl to blow his trumpet. He blew it and the spirits gathered together. They experienced fear and terror such as will occur in the thunderclap of death and the Resurrection, or even more so. Once they were gathered together, the Creator—He is mighty and glorious—caused them to hear His indescribable speech and asked: "Am I not your Lord?" As for the people of felicity, they responded to their Lord with joy and delight. And here the difference between them appeared in their response, as well as the diversity of their ranks with regard to their vision. The shaykh was clearly distinguished from the novice and it became known that So-and-so was attached to So-and-so, whereas So-and-so was cut off from him. Likewise, the differences between the prophets appeared—blessings and peace be upon them—and between their communities. As for the people of wretchedness—God protect us from this state—they heard God's speech and they were troubled and disturbed. They replied begrudgingly. They then fled the way bees flee when smoke is deployed against them. These spirits experienced baseness and their lights were eclipsed. At this time the believer was distinguished from the infidel. And on this occasion every spirit had its place designated for it in Barzakh. Before this the spirits were in Barzakh and each one occupied any place it wished and then transferred from it to another place if it wished.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever now looks at Barzakh knows, by the strength of their lights or the strength of their darkness, which spirits have come forth from physical bodies, and he knows, by their lack of this, which spirits haven't [yet] gone forth into the world.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Once the spirits that haven't gone forth into the world are used up and they've all emerged so there's no spirit left that hasn't gone forth, then the Resurrection will take place.'

[4]

I, al-Lamaṭī, said that those endowed with unveiling must know the final hour and when it will occur. (310) Indeed, God the Sublime has said: 'Surely God has knowledge of the Hour and He sends down the rain, etc.' (31/34). And the Prophet said—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'In five [portents of the end of the world] which only God the Sublime knows.'

Al-Dabbāgh replied—God be pleased with him: ‘The Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said this because of something that appeared to him at that moment. Otherwise, nothing of the five [signs] referred to in the noble Qur’ānic verse is hidden from him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! How could this be hidden from him since the seven Pivots from his noble community know it? And they’re even lower than the Support. So how would the Support not know it and then how would the lord of the first and the last [of mankind] not know it, since he’s the cause of all things and everything originates from him?’

Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘Now Barzakh, before the spirits returned from physical shapes, had little light and before the creation of Adam and during his days it had little light. But once Adam’s spirit ascended to Barzakh, as well as the spirits of the prophets from his progeny—blessings and peace be upon them—and the spirits of the Friends of God among them, its light gradually began to multiply. This was so because the spirits only ascended to Barzakh gradually.’

Then I asked: ‘And where are the spirits of the infidels in Barzakh after they’ve emerged from physical shapes?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘In the lowest level of Barzakh. If you look at their abode in Barzakh, you’ll find it’s black, in fact as dark as charcoal. What makes it black is the state of the infidels who reside there. This is because the hereafter is the reverse of the here and now. In the world if a person puts on splendid, shining white clothes, they remain this way until dirt adheres to them from something external. But in the hereafter the dirt of clothing comes from bodies. If you suppose an infidel puts on a garment that’s considered beautiful, something that’s dazzling white, in one instant the garment becomes blacker than charcoal.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Even the air that surrounds us possesses opposite states in the two worlds. In the here and now if it’s luminous, it shines on the physical masses of the bodies of the believers and the infidels. But in the hereafter bodies prevail over the air and rule it. Thus the believers’ bodies shine on the air (311) and it dresses itself in light of the believers that dazzles minds. As for the infidels’ bodies, they heat the air and blacken it until it becomes like the blackest possible charcoal. In short, the qualifications of interior things appear in the hereafter because these are what’s true and the hereafter is an abode characterized by truth.’

[5]

And he answered me along similar lines—God be pleased with him—regarding sweat in the hereafter which reaches to the mouth of some, attains the waists of another group, and the knees of others, if the earth is level where they're located. In the world, if three people stand in water where the earth is level, it's impossible for the water to differ like this.

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'Since they were different in their interior with respect to the world, the effect of this appears in the hereafter because it's an abode characterized by truth.'

Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'In the part of Barzakh with the infidels there are date-palm branches that stretch forth from it like a long, drawn-out column. These branches extend to the region of Hell, and so Hell's suffering, its exemplary punishment and its evil-smelling odor cause the people of the date-palm branches to resemble someone who is himself actually in Hell. Those who reside in these date-palm branches are the hypocrites and whichever infidels God has directed His wrath against.'

In the part of Barzakh with the spirits of the blissful there are also date-palm branches that stretch forth from it and extend to the region of Paradise. The delights of Paradise, its blessings and its sweet-smelling odor cause these people to resemble someone who is himself in Paradise. Those who reside in these date-palm branches are the martyrs and whomever God the Sublime has shown mercy. Now the said date-palm branches in [the areas of] Barzakh where the two groups reside form part of Barzakh but they're something like an addition to it that projects from it and heads off to a region that's different from Barzakh.'

[6]

And I said: 'The bottom of Barzakh is located in the lowest heaven, and if the spirits of the infidels are in it, they can only be there if the gates of heaven were opened for them. But God the Sublime has said: (312) "The gates of heaven shall not be opened for them" (7/40). Likewise, the religious scholars have stated that the part of Barzakh for the believers extends from their graves up to the summit of the Loftiest Heights (*'illiyyūn*), and the part for the infidels from their graves down to Sijjīn which is the lowest reaches of the world.'

And one time he said—God be pleased with him: 'In fact, if the spirit of the infidel is in the lowest heaven, i.e. the bottom of Barzakh, it's become veiled because, figuratively speaking, its eye, its ear, and its heart along with all its senses have been sewn shut,



and so it's like someone for whom the gates of heaven haven't been opened.' Another time he said: 'The spirits of the infidels in Barzakh are of two kinds. There's the kind that's veiled due to the predominance of darkness and a wicked state so that the spirit can't see and observe anything, be it small or great. This is the veil of divine wrath—we beseech God for protection from it! And then there's the kind that isn't veiled. It does see but all it sees is the punishment that's been prepared for it. Both these kinds are within the wrath of God, and this resembles the situation of someone for whom the gates of heaven haven't been opened.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the disagreement among the religious scholars concerning His words: 'The gates of heaven shall not be opened for them' (7/40) gives support to al-Dabbāgh. Some say: '[Closed] to their prayers of supplication', in the sense that their prayers aren't accepted. Others say: '[Closed] to their spirits', in the sense that the gates aren't opened for them the way they're opened for the spirits of the believers. Consult al-Bayḍāwī.<sup>5</sup> Al-Dabbāgh is also supported by their disagreement about the *ḥadīth* of the persons (*al-aswida*)<sup>6</sup> who were on the left side of Adam when he was in heaven. The Prophet's words in the *ḥadīth* are: 'These are the spirits of the infidels among his offspring.' Some scholars take this in its literal sense, whereas others interpret it figuratively.

Another time he said: 'When we say that Barzakh has its beginning in the lowest heaven, as previously described, we don't mean it's only in the region above our heads but it's also beneath our feet because the sky encompasses the earth. Each heaven encompasses what's in its center and the Celestial Throne encompasses the whole. Barzakh is an immense creation. The width of its foundation, which is its most narrow part, is seven times the size of the earth. Even if we say that it's above our heads, a part of it is actually beneath our feet. Whoever among the religious scholars says: "Their spirits are in the lowest reaches [of the world]" means by this the area of the bottom of Barzakh which is opposite the area of our lowest level.'

(313) I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that it's as if he's saying—God be pleased with him: 'Barzakh penetrates the seven heavens to the summit of the Loftiest Heights and penetrates the seven earths to the lowest reaches [of the world]. And its lowest place is in Sijjīn below the seventh earth, whereas its highest point is in the Loftiest Heights

<sup>5</sup> See *Anwār al-tanzīl* I, p. 338.

<sup>6</sup> See p. 324, fn. 206.

above the seventh heaven.' This he stated clearly on more than one occasion. Moreover, this is in agreement with Paradise being above the heavens and Hell being below the earths. Barzakh's lowest point is in the region of Hell, and the spirits of the infidels, the wretched and the dissolute are located there. Its highest point is in the region of Paradise, and the spirits of the believers, the blessed and the good are located there. Nor is this inconsistent with the previous disagreement about opening the gates of heaven. The fact that Barzakh is as just described doesn't oblige one to conclude that the gates of heaven don't open for the spirits of the infidels.

And another time he said—God be pleased with him: 'There are infidels whose spirit, when they die, is hindered from ascending to Barzakh. This spirit is subjected to the power of the satans and devils who used to make wicked suggestions to the body it inhabited while in the world. When the spirit came forth from the body, these satans received it and began playing with it—God protect us from this—the way children play with a ball. One satan throws it to another satan. They hurl it against rocks and torment it with an unbearable torment from God until the body that's in the grave deteriorates and turns to dust. Once this happens, the spirit ascends to its abode in the lowest part of Barzakh. So whoever takes heaven as not opening for their spirits in this sense, or in some similar way, is correct.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that there's no contradiction in what he said on these occasions but this is a single discourse and a consistent doctrine. One part of it is united with another part. It's only that I separated it in accordance with how I heard it. You may say: 'Most of the discourse on these different occasions requires that the bottom of Barzakh be located in the lowest heaven, whereas it was clearly stated to you that its bottom is in the lowest reaches [of the world]. Now this certainly contradicts what preceded and requires that the bottom of Barzakh be beneath the seventh earth. On the other hand, what preceded requires that it be in the lowest heaven.' To this I reply that if what preceded is applied to the bottom in relation to the blissful, and the latter is applied to the bottom in relation to the wretched, then, as is evident, there's no disagreement between them.

And you may say: 'That's true but what preceded requires that the spirits of the infidels be in this particular bottom which is the lowest heaven. The other statement requires that they aren't in this bottom but rather in the bottom beneath [the world]. The two statements therefore contradict one another.' (314) To this I reply that the spirits of the infidels differ from one another as was described. Some of

them are in this bottom, while others are in those date-palm branches. Others still are located between these two bottoms. And there are some located in the third earth.

And he said to me—God be pleased with him—that he saw people in the third earth in narrow rooms, scorching fire, dark pits and uninterrupted torment. None could utter a single word before his abyss swallowed him up, and he was engaged in rising and falling.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Then while I was looking at them, a man from their midst suddenly appeared to me. In the House of the world I’d known him by name and in person. I called out to him by his name and said: “Woe unto you! What caused you to descend to this abode?” He was about to speak to me but his abyss swallowed him up.’

What’s most probable, I think, is that I said to the Shaykh—God be pleased with him: ‘This is one of the places in Barzakh because Barzakh penetrates the seven earths down to the lowest reaches [of the world].’ And he replied: ‘What you say is true.’ That’s how he replied to me. But God knows best! I have no doubt about all the things I’ve recorded in this book except for these words. I’ve drawn attention to them so that their [lofty] rank may be known. But God knows best! Moreover, the man whom the Shaykh—God be pleased with him—saw in this particular earth had been one of the faithful in the House of the world.

Then he said—God be pleased with him: ‘One of the astonishing things about the will of our Lord—He is sublime and exalted—is that He veiled—without employing a veil—the spirits of the infidels from receiving benefit from the spirits of the believers.’ He said: ‘Those lights possess brilliance and radiance and nothing from these celestial orbs reaches them. Rather the light of the celestial orbs actually comes from those lights, as will be described presently.<sup>7</sup> None the less, as far as this light is concerned the spirit of the infidel derives no benefit from it and isn’t illuminated by it, either to a small or to a great extent. Instead, the infidel’s spirit remains in its darkness and its blackness which are beyond description. And as for these lights, the infidel’s spirit is veiled from them as if someone had placed them in the container of an Indian *mann*<sup>8</sup> and sealed it with lead. One may suppose, however, that there’s no container and no

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<sup>7</sup> See 2/319.

<sup>8</sup> The *mann* is a unit of weight that varies from one country to another. The container mentioned here seems to refer to a box for keeping a metal weight used in scales.

lead but only His will—He is sublime and exalted—that hinders the diffusion of benefit to the infidel spirit.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘As for the spirits of the believers, they derive benefit (315) from one another and they give one another to drink and intercede on one another’s behalf. Thus in some spirits you observe the vestiges of sins that the body acquired and you see these vestiges quite clearly upon the spirit. But then these vestiges disappear because of a spirit which is dear to God the Sublime and close to the spirit that bears the vestiges.’

[7]

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Between Barzakh with the places it contains and Paradise there are threads of light which only occur in Barzakh after the spirits have ascended from their physical shapes. That light is the light of faith. You see it come forth from the spirit of Zayd,<sup>9</sup> for instance, in Barzakh and penetrate to Paradise. Then the body of that Friend of God receives support from Paradise because of the light. Similarly, between the [part of] Barzakh with the spirits of the infidels and Hell there are threads and darkness. And they only occur in Hell after the spirits have ascended from their physical shapes. That darkness is unbelief—we seek protection from it with God! Thus you see it come forth on its way to Hell and the [only] support the spirits of the infidels receive is from the hot wind (*samūm*) of Hell and Hell’s punishment.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘In the same way, between Barzakh and the bodies of the believers in the world there are threads which are the light of their faith. Thus a person with deeper vision (*baṣīra*) sees the thread of faith, white and pure, like penetrating rays of the sun passing through a narrow space. If the sun strikes against a door, for instance, you see strings and threads from the sun’s rays penetrate to the other side of the door. Likewise, someone with deeper vision beholds among the living believers a thread coming forth from each of them, extending from his head. It only becomes visible to him after it’s risen the distance of one span above the head. Then he sees it extend up to the abode in Barzakh that belongs to the spirit within this believer. The thread varies depending on a person’s pre-eternal allotment. There are those whose thread is seen to be like the one just described. That of others is observed to be thicker and to have the thickness of a reed. And the thread of others is observed to be even thicker and to have the form

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<sup>9</sup> The equivalent of ‘John Doe’.

of a palm-tree. These are the great among the Friends of God—God be pleased with them!

Similarly, threads like these are observed between the bodies of the infidels and their abode in Barzakh, except that the threads of the infidels have a blue color tending toward black, like the fire of sulphur. This is a sign of wretchedness in whomever it's observed—we seek protection from it with God! And this thread also varies as was just described. Some persons are seen to have a thin one and others are seen to have a thick one, like a palm-tree. It depends on their varying degree of unbelief. We beseech God for protection from this!

(316) He said—God be pleased with him: 'How many times I've looked at Jews who live in the Jewish quarter (*mallāḥ*) and coming forth from their heads I've seen threads that join together on the horizon and ascend like black mist. And among them are little white threads, pure and radiant, and due to this I know that the possessors of these threads will transfer to the religion of the Prophet, that is to say our Prophet Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And I look at a city among the cities of Islam and I see threads coming forth from the people's heads, threads that are pure and radiant, ascending to Barzakh. And among the people are some threads containing dark blue—only a few—but they're a sign of the wretchedness of the person they're observed in, as has previously been explained.'<sup>10</sup>

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that these are the ones referred to in the *ḥadīth*: 'The man performs the works of those destined for Paradise, as far as what appears to people. Then what was written in pre-eternity overtakes him and he performs the works of those destined for Hell and enters Hell.' And the believers observed among the Jews are also the ones referred to in his words—God's blessings and peace be upon him: 'The man performs the works of those destined for Hell until only one span of the hand remains between himself and Hell. Then what was written in pre-eternity overtakes him and he performs the works of those destined for Paradise and enters Paradise.'<sup>11</sup>

Another time he said—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever wishes to see what was ordained in pre-eternity and what God the Sublime said in the *ḥadīth*: "These will enter Paradise and I don't care, whereas these will enter Hell and I don't care"<sup>12</sup>—let him look at

<sup>10</sup> In the two paragraphs preceding this one.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the editor's fn., II, p. 316; *Concordance* II, p. 402.

<sup>12</sup> *Concordance* I, p. 218; cf. the editor's fn., II, p. 316.

little children. That is to say, if he's an adept of this unveiling, he'll see among them one whose thread is radiant and one whose thread is dark blue. And they aren't yet obligated to observe the religious duties. None the less, what's been decided in pre-eternity has been decided.'

One time we passed by two small children who were about four years old and they were playing. He said to me: 'Look at what this one does and look at what the other one does!' That is to say, the thread of one of them was radiant and that of the other dark blue.

Another time, as we walked past a group of children who were playing, he said to me—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever looks at the children of the present era knows the goodness of this era compared with the one that's coming in the future. Indeed, most of the lights of the children of this era are of extreme goodness and beauty.'

And one time we passed by a place and a child came out. Al-Dabbāgh looked at him and asked him: 'What's your name?' The child replied: 'Al-Miqdād.' Al-Dabbāgh said—God be pleased with him: 'A great Friend of God is going to emerge from him who will be dear to God—He is mighty and glorious!'

And one time he looked at another boy and said to me: 'Behold the light of Friendship with God! Look at (317) its sweetness in his face! Look at the Friendship with God in his body! Surely, it isn't hidden from anyone.' Then he said to me—God be pleased with him: 'I charge you to take good care of him.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that today the boy has grown up and become a man—praise be to God! He's performed the pilgrimage to Mecca and experienced great visions. Moreover, his state is one of goodness, his affair one of uprightness and his face gives off a beautiful radiance.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The moment the body drops from the womb to the ground, a person with this unveiling knows what it will be like, as in the case of a tree. Before a tree is planted, one doesn't know whether something will come of it or not. If it's then planted and it comes forth to the eye, one can tell the watermelon's leaf from other kinds of leaves. The same is true of a flower that's yellow and won't become green, and one that's red and won't become yellow.'

Then I asked him—God be pleased with him: 'Why are the hypocrites the worst of the infidels in the lowest depth of Hell, despite their having performed ritual prayers, fasting, the pilgrimage

to Mecca and holy war? Even if they hadn't done any of that, they at least held back their harm from the people of Islam.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'For God's sake, oh So-and-so! Unbelief, and its wickedness and its immensity, come forth from what occurred in pre-eternity, not from actions. How many times I looked at Barzakh and saw a gloom-laden column, dark blue and wicked, extend itself and descend from Barzakh, heading for one of the cities of the infidels—God curse them! I said to myself: "This column will only alight on their sultan and will only descend on their tyrannical ruler."'" He said: 'Then I follow it with my eyes and I see it descend on a little, weak old man sitting in his shop to earn a living. Thereupon I profess God's oneness and I praise Him and offer Him thanks for His favors.'

And one time he said to me: 'Although the blue thread is an indication of wretchedness (damnation), it can change with permission from God, if the possessor of this thread mingles with the people of felicity and associates and is intimate with them. Then little by little his thread will go on purifying itself until he becomes like the people of felicity. Praise be to God!'

And one time he said to me: 'Even if the blue thread is blue (318) and contains no radiance, we've seen it change, whereas if there was some radiance with the blue, we haven't seen the radiance change.'

[8]

He said to me another time: 'It belongs to the wisdom of sending forth prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—that the prophets gather the people around their word so they become people of one religion, and they give each other sincere advice and mutual assistance. Among them are people of felicity and among them are those with a blue thread. If the latter then maintain a long association with the people of felicity, they become blissful (saved) through the blessing (*baraka*) of coming together with the people of felicity. Through sending forth prophets the coming together of people takes place and through the coming together of people change occurs. This is one of the benefits of sending forth prophets.'

I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that this provides an explanation of the secret behind the Prophet's command to adhere to the Community (*jamā'a*) and not to leave it by so much as a span of the hand. For whoever departs from the community dies a death as in the pre-Islamic period of ignorance.

And I was with him one day—God be pleased with him—in one of the markets and his blessed hand was in my hand as we walked along. I was absorbed in questioning him about these sciences of

unveiling. We then met a man whom the people held in esteem for his godliness and he made every effort to encourage this. He addressed us with words in which he placed good advice, though his purpose was something different as appeared from signs in his circumstances. We refrained from answering him. The Shaykh then said to me afterwards—God be pleased with him: ‘His thread is blue—God protect us from it!’ This he swore to me several times. Nor do I know whether his thread eventually changed or not.

[9]

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘When the body dies, the spirit is transferred to Barzakh and the spirit’s secret is cut off from the body. If the body is transformed and perishes, its secret may remain connected to the grave in the case of some Friends of God. A column of the light of his faith continues to exist in the grave, extending up to the spirit which is in Barzakh, the way it existed in the body previously.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘How many times I’ve looked at graves in Fez and their facades<sup>13</sup> and certain places in them! Then I see lights coming forth from the earth, heading for (319) Barzakh in the form of a reed that grows out of the ground and extends up to Barzakh. Thus I know that the possessors of those lights are outstanding Friends of God.’

And how many times he said to me: ‘Here in this place is a great Friend of God! Here’s his light coming forth on its way to Barzakh!’ And it’s like this with the light in the grave of our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! The column of the light of his faith—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—extends from the noble grave up to the dome of Barzakh where his pure spirit is located. The angels come in groups and circle round the noble outstretched light. They court its favor and implore its help like bees around their chief bee. Every angel who’s too weak for a secret or too weak to bear a command or has experienced fatigue or is wavering in his post comes to the noble light and circles round it. If he circles round it, he acquires perfect power and immense striving from the Prophet’s light—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and he returns to his place and his affair is strengthened. Moreover, he doesn’t stop his circumambulation until another group of angels arrives and everyone of them undertakes the circumambulation.’

And one time he said to me: ‘When God wished to confer illumination on me and to join me with His mercy, I looked at the

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<sup>13</sup> Or perhaps one should read *ajinna*: ‘gardens’ instead of *ajbina*: ‘facades’.



noble grave [of the Prophet]—and I was in Fez—and then I looked at the noble light, and it began to approach me and when it was close to me, a man came forth from it and behold, it was the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him! Sayyidī ‘Abd Allāh al-Barnāwī then said to me: “Oh Sayyidī ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, God has joined you with His mercy which is the lord of existence—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and now I’m not afraid of the satans making sport of you.”

[10]

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘Barzakh is a wondrous matter. It dresses itself in the lights of the faith of the believers such that it dazzles minds. Even the light of the sun is from these believing spirits. As for the light of the stars and the moon, it comes from the light of the sun. That’s because the bottom of Barzakh is black and dark—as was described earlier—and no illumination occurs to the celestial bodies opposite it. Barzakh impedes and blocks their being illuminated by the light that the sun is illuminated with. For if they drew light from it, the foundation of Barzakh would draw light from it and the spirits of the infidels would profit from the spirits of the believers. But God the Sublime didn’t want this. Thus these celestial bodies draw light from the sun because the sun is outside (320) Barzakh. The celestial bodies are located opposite the sun and so they acquire illumination. And the moon is in the lowest heaven in such a way that it’s close to us.’

Then I said: ‘The astrologers claim that the fixed stars are in the sphere of the fixed stars which is the eighth sphere.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Where do they get this idea from?’

I said: ‘They claim it’s based on the course of the fixed stars being different from the course of the seven planets.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘It isn’t the way they think. All the stars are located in the lowest heaven.’

Then he spoke about what each heaven is like, what it contains and its inhabitants, but it isn’t proper for me to write this down. Nor should you imagine, oh reader of this book, that I’ve recorded everything I heard from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him! I’ve only written down a small part of it. And this is what I heard from him about Barzakh. God give us profit through it—amen!

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

Pp. 894-99. Description of al-Firdaws and its rivers that flow with water, honey, milk and wine. The difference between al-Firdaws, the Loftiest Heights, and Lofty Paradise, better known as the House of Increase. Harmonization of *ḥadīths* dealing with the different paradises by explaining that the Prophet's dome includes all three of the above. Quss b. Sā'ida and Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl, who lived in the time period between Jesus and Muḥammad, perceived God's oneness through divine guidance rather than the sending of a prophet and will inhabit al-Firdaws.

Pp. 899-901. The number of paradises and their names: House of Peace, Paradise of Delight, Paradise of Refuge, House of Eternity, Paradise of Eden, al-Firdaws, Loftiest Heights and House of Increase. Paradise has eight gates. Nothing on the face of the earth resembles Paradise. Comparisons indicating the vast extent of even the lowest paradise.

Pp. 901-02. Description of the couches in Paradise and how one can move about on them in all six directions. Kinds of fruit and edibles there don't resemble anything in the world.

Pp. 902-04. The eight angels before the gates of Paradise are the angels who carry the Celestial Throne. Figuratively speaking, 'the gate of repentance' is one of the gates of Paradise. At the end of time, the light of truth will be removed from the earth, i.e. the members of the Dīwān who carry a share of that light will disappear.

Pp. 904-05. The angels on the outskirts of Paradise invoke blessings on the Prophet and Paradise expands toward them in all directions.

Pp. 905-09. Is one's invoking blessings on the Prophet always 'accepted'? Different views on the subject.

Pp. 909-11. Description of clothing worn in Paradise. Those who experience sadness and affliction in Paradise. Fornicators who enter Paradise feel shame and remorse. Those who wore silk and drank wine in the world won't be allowed to do so along with everyone else in Paradise.

Pp. 911-12. The believers visualize the delights of Paradise in their mind, whereas the Friend of God is cut off from everything other than God. No thought other than the thought of God ever enters his mind. The similitude of the worm in the honey pot.

## (323) CHAPTER ELEVEN

On Paradise, its arrangement and its number, and other related matters.

I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him—about the paradise al-Firdaws:<sup>1</sup> ‘All the delights one has heard of in the world and [others] one hasn’t heard of in the world are found in the paradise al-Firdaws.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Among them is the gushing forth of the rivers of Paradise.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is as in the *ḥadīth* transmitted by al-Bukhārī and others.

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The rivers flow in such a way that four drinks are contained in each of them: water, honey, milk and wine. They flow in each river but don’t mingle with one another, like the colors in a rainbow. You see the colors contained in a rainbow, red, yellow, blue and green, and the colors remain unmixed. This is how the drinks in Paradise are. They’re observed flowing together in a single river without the one mixing with the other. They flow in accordance with the desire of the believer in Paradise. If he feels the desire for the four, they flow forth for him. But if the person that comes after him only desires two of them, those two flow forth, while the other two cease—through the will of God the Sublime! And if the next person desires one, the other three cease and only one flows for him. If then another person feels the desire for more than four, what he desires flows forth for him—through permission from God the Sublime! So if you look at the flow from beginning to end, you see that the flow contains four kinds in one place, two kinds in another, then one kind in one place and five in another, without any barrier and partition. Exalted be the creator King!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And the rivers don’t flow in a hollowed-out channel.’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is as in the *ḥadīth* where [it’s mentioned] that they don’t flow in a trench.

One time I was with him in the Bāb al-Futūḥ and I said to him: ‘I heard Sayyidī So-and-so say—(324) God give us profit through him: “A certain person saw the *mafrūṭ*<sup>2</sup> of Paradise to be one ell long.”’ He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘I saw it to be like a wall’—

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<sup>1</sup> EQ, s.v. Paradise.

<sup>2</sup> The meaning of this word is unclear.

he meant the wall facing the *qibla* of the Muṣallā of the Bāb al-Futūḥ. Another time he said to me: 'The *mafrūṭ* in it is similar to the wall in length, more or less.'

Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'The people think that the paradise of al-Firdaws is the most excellent and the highest of the paradises and that none of the other paradises attains its degree. But this isn't so. There's another paradise more excellent and higher than it and it contains none of the [other] delights. It's only inhabited by the people with vision of God—He is mighty and glorious—from among His prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and from among His Friends—God be pleased with them and give us profit through them!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Direct vision of God—He is mighty and glorious—for those who possess it is more precious and more pleasant, more lofty and more excellent, than every other delight the mind can imagine. The people of this paradise don't want to leave it to go to any of the other paradises, just as the dwellers in Paradise don't want to leave it to go into the world.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Most of those who dwell in the paradise al-Firdaws are from the community of our Prophet and our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Only some twenty persons from among them, who are people of wickedness and grave sins, have been excluded along with whomever from this community God wishes not to dwell there. We beseech God for His forgiveness and His generosity!'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Our lord Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has an immense love for his community and he likes to visit them in Paradise and have contact with them, the way a family member has contact with relatives. For this reason God has joined together for him the center of Lofty Paradise (*al-janna al-ʿāliya*) that's endowed with the divine vision just mentioned and the center of the paradise of al-Firdaws with its sumptuous delights. And the whole of this has been made the residence of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and this isn't bestowed on any creature other than him. Thus he has contact—God's blessings and peace be upon him—with everyone of his community, both the people of divine vision and the others as well. God make us a member of his community and don't let us deviate from his Sunna and his path!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, was of the opinion that this Lofty Paradise he referred to—God be pleased with him—is the paradise of the Loftiest

Heights (*‘illiyyūn*). But God knows best! And Ibn ‘Asākir<sup>3</sup> has published from Abū Sa‘īd (325) al-Khudrī<sup>4</sup> that the Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said: ‘When one of the inhabitants of the Loftiest Heights looks down on Paradise and his face shines brightly for the people of Paradise, it’s like when the moon shines upon the people of the world on the night of the full moon. And Abū Bakr and ‘Umar are with them.’ Moreover, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], al-Tirmidhī and Ibn Ḥibbān have published from Abū Sa‘īd, and al-Ṭabarānī from Jābir b. Samura, and Ibn ‘Asākir from Ibn ‘Umar and Abū Hurayra—God be pleased with them—that the Apostle of God said—God’s blessings and peace be upon him: ‘The inhabitants of the lofty degrees are seen by someone lower than them the way you see a star rising on the sky’s horizon. And Abū Bakr and ‘Umar are with them.’ Consult *al-Jāmi‘ al-ṣaghīr* [by al-Suyūṭī].<sup>5</sup> And whoever also consults *al-Budūr al-sāfira*<sup>6</sup> about the *ḥadīths* that deal with seeing God, which is what the book comes to a close with, will understand the correctness of this. And he presents other names for Lofty Paradise such as the House of Increase, which occurs in the *ḥadīth* of Ḥudhayfa<sup>7</sup> and others. And Abū Nu‘aym has published from Abū Yazīd (326) al-Biṣṭāmī: ‘He said: “God has selected people among His bondsmen such that if He were to veil them in Paradise from seeing Him, they would beseech Him for help the way the dwellers in Hell beseech Him for help.”’<sup>8</sup> But God knows best!

And I asked him—God be pleased with him—about what seemed right to me—as was just mentioned—concerning the name to give to Lofty Paradise, and I told him it was the paradise of the Loftiest Heights.

But he replied—God be pleased with him: ‘No, that’s something else.’

I said: ‘In *ḥadīths* it says this and that.’ And I was referring to the previous *ḥadīth* of Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī. He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Yes.’ And I understood that he wanted to be agreeable.

3 ‘Ibrīziana’, p. 150, CXXXIII; Ibn ‘Asākir died 571/1176.

4 *Usd* VI, p. 142, no. 5954.

5 *Concordance* II, p. 119.

6 *Budūr*, pp. 599 ff.

7 Cf. editor’s ftn., II, p. 325; al-Munāwī, *Kaw*. I, p. 132, no. 14; Ḥudhayfa died 36/656.

8 *Hilya* X, p. 326.

Then I said to him: 'Tell me what you know.' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The paradise of the Loftiest Heights is above the paradise of al-Firdaws, being outside its area and not directly opposite it, whereas this Lofty Paradise is another paradise.'

And I asked: 'Is it named the House of Increase?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'That's the name. And it contains no delights except the vision of God—He is exalted!' It was already mentioned that vision of God for those capable of it is more precious to them than every delight. He said: 'Because beholding God the Sublime contains more pleasure than all the delights in Paradise. It includes what's in Paradise as well as the addition of something else. Moreover, the pleasure of those who experience it is pleasure of the spirit, whereas the pleasure of those other than the people of this paradise is pleasure of their eternal bodies.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever experiences the pleasure of one of these two kinds is unable to support the other. Only one created being is capable of joining the two together and he's the lord of the first and the last [of mankind], our Prophet and our master Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him! He can support what no one else can support of the pleasures of divine vision and its secrets, and he also enjoys by means of his body what no one else enjoys of the delight of Paradise. Nor does the one distract him from the other. Exalted be He Who has given him the strength for this and enabled him to do it.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'This paradise is above the paradise al-Firdaws and opposite to it. And the number of its inhabitants is small compared with the other paradises. As for the paradise of the Loftiest Heights, it contains innumerable delights. The paradise of al-Firdaws has more kinds of delights than it but the paradise of the Loftiest Heights has finer and more delicate delights.' It was as if he was saying that it was almost (327) a spiritual delight because of its closeness to the House of Increase whose delight is spiritual and not of the senses. 'And the paradise of the Loftiest Heights is higher and more pleasurable, whereas the delights of the paradise of al-Firdaws are more numerous. And in the paradise of the Loftiest Heights a group of prophets resides, among them our lord Abraham and our lord Ishmael—peace be upon them!'

Then I asked: 'And what are we to make of the *ḥadīths* that indicate the paradise of al-Firdaws is the highest of the paradises, such as the *ḥadīth* transmitted by al-Bukhārī: "If you ask for

something, ask God for al-Firdaws. It's the middle of Paradise and the highest paradise."<sup>9</sup>

(328) Someone has said: "The middle of Paradise means the best and the highest of it in truth." And someone else has said: "The middle may be higher like the middle of a hill which is a middle that's higher." The *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī mentions this in *al-Budūr al-sāfira*.<sup>10</sup> And there are other such *ḥadīths* as well.'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Whoever wishes to call these three paradises one paradise may do so. He'll say concerning the whole: "This is the Firdaws paradise", considering that the Prophet's dome—God's blessings and peace be upon him—occupies the House of Increase, the paradise of the Loftiest Heights, and the paradise of al-Firdaws. So whoever is in the paradise of al-Firdaws is with the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and whoever is in the Loftiest Heights is with him and similarly whoever is in the House of Increase is also with him. Moreover, whoever looks at his station—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and takes the three paradises to be one paradise may also do so.' He said—God be pleased with him: (329) 'The honored dome occupies the middle of al-Firdaws and goes forth in the direction of the Loftiest Heights and occupies them until it arrives in the House of Increase and it occupies the middle of it.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that in this way the *ḥadīths* are harmonized. But God knows best!

Then I asked: 'Do the remaining paradises contain delights?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'They contain delights in accordance with the works of their inhabitants. However, the paradise of al-Firdaws is for this religious community and for whoever has professed God's oneness through divine guidance rather than through the sending of a prophet.'

I said: 'As in the case of Quss b. Sā'ida<sup>11</sup> and Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl.'<sup>12</sup>

He said—(330) God be pleased with him: 'Did the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—testify on their behalf?' At that moment I didn't have an answer to hand. Then I saw in the *Sharḥ Manẓūmat al-qubūr* by Ibn Khalīl al-Subkī<sup>13</sup> the statement that the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—did

<sup>9</sup> Cf. editor's fn., II, p. 327; *Concordance* VII, p. 207.

<sup>10</sup> *Budūr*, p. 496, no. 1705.

<sup>11</sup> *A'lam* V, p. 196.

<sup>12</sup> *A'lam* III, p. 60.

<sup>13</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 150, CXXXIV; al-Subkī died 1032/1623.

testify on their behalf that on the Day of Resurrection they'd be resurrected as a community on their own. The words of the text are: 'One of the religious scholars says: "The people of the time period between Jesus and Muḥammad (*al-fatra*) are in three categories. The first is someone who perceived God's oneness through his deeper vision (*baṣīra*) and among them is whoever didn't enter into a *sharī'a*, like Quss b. Sā'ida and Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl..." And then he continues after mentioning the other two categories: 'As for the first category, the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has said concerning both Quss b. Sā'ida and Zayd b. 'Amr b. Nufayl: "On the Day of Resurrection each will be resurrected as a community on his own."'—End of citation.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what he meant by one of the religious scholars was Ubbī in the *Sharḥ Muslim*. And the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī transmits Ubbī's words in the *Masālik al-ḥunafā'*<sup>14</sup> more extensively than does the commentator on the *Manẓūma* just referred to.

I then met al-Dabbāgh—God be pleased with him—and presented these words to him. He said—God be pleased with him: 'I wanted to say the same thing but I was afraid it would be quoted as signifying: "The Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—testified that the people of the Age of Ignorance (*al-jāhiliyya*) will enter Paradise." So I wanted to test whether the religious scholars have spoken about this. Praise be to God for the existence of their words that agree with mine.' He said: 'These persons and their like are among the inhabitants of the paradise al-Firdaws because their belief in God in the midst of their people who were infidels was due to the fact that God the Sublime's immense concern for them made it a necessity that they receive a great light. With that light they penetrated the darkness of unbelief and attained the profession of God's oneness—He is mighty and glorious—without their having a guide from their own people.'

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I asked: 'And how many paradises are there?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Eight.'

(331) Then I asked: 'And which is the first of them?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The House of Peace (*dār al-salām*). Then comes the Paradise of Delight (*jannat al-na'īm*). Then comes the Paradise of Refuge (*jannat al-ma'wā*). Then comes the House of Eternity (*dār al-khulūd*). Then comes the Paradise of Eden (*jannat 'Adn*). Then comes the Paradise of al-Firdaws (*jannat al-firdaws*).

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14 *Ḥāwī* II, pp. 197 f.



Then comes the Paradise of the Loftiest Heights (*jannat al-‘illiyyīn*). And then comes the House of Increase (*dār al-mazīd*).’

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that the religious scholars—God be pleased with them—don’t present a precise account of the number of the paradises, as one understands from *al-Budūr al-sāfira* by the ḥāfiẓ al-Suyūṭī—God have mercy on him! He transmits from one person that their number is four, from another that it’s seven, and from another still that it’s one paradise. And I would note that its number being eight accords with its having eight gates, as has been reported in numerous *ḥadīths* where the Prophet says: ‘The eight gates of Paradise were opened for him.’ And this is transmitted in numerous *ḥadīths*. Consult them in *al-Budūr al-sāfira*.<sup>15</sup>

And he said—God be pleased with him: ‘The arrangement of the paradises isn’t the way people think. People think they’re only arranged in the upward direction and that, being arranged in the upward direction, one paradise is located above the other in the order previously described. But they aren’t like that. Instead, the number [eight] is established in the six directions. If someone comes from below, he’ll find this number of paradises. And if someone comes from the right, he’ll find this number of paradises. And so it is for all the directions. The affair of the hereafter doesn’t resemble the affair of the world. But God knows best!’

And another time I asked him—God be pleased with him—about the paradises, their arrangement and the way they were laid out.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘There’s nothing on the face of the earth and among God’s created beings which bears a resemblance to Paradise, except for Barzakh. Barzakh does bear a resemblance to Paradise. But people haven’t seen Barzakh, so how is such a comparison appropriate?’ Then I said to him: ‘Given that Barzakh is the trumpet—we’ve heard in the *ḥadīths* that it’s an enormous creation like a horn, one circle of it being the size of what lies between the heavens and the earth.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: (333) ‘Yes. And it contains holes like the holes of a sponge of the sea. In these holes are the spirits. And these holes aren’t only on its exterior but Barzakh possesses enormous depth. That as well consists of holes as on its exterior. Let’s compare these holes to the holes that occur in the honeycomb of bees. And if we wish to make the likeness even closer, we’ll add one honeycomb to another so that they come to a total of twenty honeycombs, for instance. Then let’s join this

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<sup>15</sup> *Budūr*, pp. 494 ff.

together with that, and this to the other, so that the whole becomes one thing, and the exterior and the interior of this ensemble is all holes. And now let's suppose the honeycomb is sealed with its outer cover so the honey that's in the holes can't be seen in this thing that's been likened [to Barzakh].'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Now let's turn our attention to Paradise. If we suppose Paradise to be like this collected mass—to the extent of our understanding, not according to what it's really like in itself, since (334) God's mercy is endless and beyond any calculable limit—then we'll say: "If we divide this mass into seven parts, the unit in the first part referred to as a hole will be the size of the world and ten equivalents of it. And the second part will be many more times than that. The third part will be multiplied to an extent beyond any reckoning. As for the fourth part, the concupiscent soul can't grasp what pleasure is concealed for them (its inhabitants), for it contains what no eye has seen, no ear has heard, and what has never occurred in a human being's heart. The fifth is like the third. The sixth is like the second and the seventh is like the first.'"

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Be on guard not to think that the inhabitants of the first part are lower than the second part, and so on. Rather some of those in the first part are above the people in the second part.' One time he said: 'In Paradise God bestows on the believer the amount of what extends above his head in the world up to the Celestial Throne, what extends below him down to the Throne, what extends on his right as far as the Throne, what extends to his left as far as the Throne, what extends behind him to the Throne, and what extends in front of him to the Throne.' Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'And this is the lowest in rank of the people in Paradise.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Be on guard not to think that the previous similitude sets forth exhaustively or even approximately the way Paradise is laid out. Rather there's no comparison between this and Paradise whatsoever. We've only related what preceded by way of speculation since this is better than silence.'

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'The same couch appears in Paradise in different varieties. One of them has the quality of silver and one has the quality of gold. One has the quality of emerald, another the quality of silk brocade, and one the quality of red ruby. And there are other qualities beyond description. They're all of one type, not multiple and varied. Should the person on the couch desire to make an excursion and go from place to place, the

couch transports him if he wishes or, if he wishes, he transports himself. He walks in whichever of the six directions he wishes. This is in contrast to the world where he only walks in the forward direction. In Paradise he walks upward and downward, to the right and to the left, backward and forward. Likewise, he has neighbors in the six directions. This is different from most abodes of the world. The world contains nothing in the upward direction or in the downward direction. Instead, the sky is above him and below him is (335) Bahamūt.<sup>16</sup>

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘And all the delights and the kinds of fruits and edibles in Paradise don’t resemble anything in the world. If the names of the delights of Paradise, and its fruits and edibles, were to emerge in proportion with their light and according to what they really are, people wouldn’t understand anything of the words signifying them. But God the Sublime, in His generosity and His mercy, has condescended to call them by these names that people are accustomed to in the world and familiar with in their conversation. Thus He addresses them this way concerning the kinds of edibles and fruits found in Paradise so they’ll have a general understanding, even if the fruits themselves are different.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘The only thing I can compare this to are the designations current between ourselves and our children in accordance with their minds and their young age. Thus for their sake we call bread “bab” and meat “shi”, and so on, when talking with young children.’ He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Now we hear that there are grapes in Paradise and we think they’re like grapes in the world. But if a grape came forth from the paradise al-Firdaws into the paradise next to it, by means of its light it would distract the inhabitants from what’s in their paradise. Likewise, if a grape came forth from that paradise into the third paradise, the inhabitants of the latter would experience the same thing the inhabitants of the second paradise experienced. And so it would continue until a grape came forth from the paradise adjacent to the inhabitants of the world—I mean the seven heavens and the seven earths—and if it came forth, because of its light the light of the sun and the moon and the stars would be eclipsed, and all that would remain would be its light and its bright glow. But God knows best!’

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And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘There are eight gates to Paradise, the same as the number of paradises previously

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<sup>16</sup> The World Fish; see *Weltgeschichte*, p. 81.

described. These gates are there before the people enter Paradise. After that event they won't remain.' I said: 'Because the purpose of the gate is entering and exiting. If exiting ceases, as in God the Sublime's words: "And neither will they ever be driven forth from here" (15/48), no use for the gate remains.' But he was silent and didn't say a word and I understood this was because of another secret he was unwilling to relate. Then he said—God be pleased with him: 'In front of each of the gates of Paradise is one of the eight angels who carry the Celestial Throne.'

I asked: 'What's the secret behind this?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'The secret is that God used the light of our Prophet and our master—God's blessings and peace be upon him—to create the number of these eight angels and the number of the (336) eight paradises. After He'd divided the light into eight parts and endowed each part with a secret from among the secrets, He made an angel and a paradise from each of these parts. The two are related to one another in origin and in secret. And from another part He made an angel and a paradise. And these two are related as to origin and secret. And so He continued until the eight parts were used up. That's why there's an angel in front of every gate who corresponds to the paradise that resembles him. Moreover, the angel in question is given to drink of the light of that paradise.'

Then I asked: 'Does the gate of repentance—the one that will be open until the sun rises from its place of setting—belong to the gates of Paradise? For this is evident from certain *ḥadīths* such as Abū Ya'īlā, al-Ṭabarānī and Ibn Abī'l-Dunyā have published from Ibn Mas'ūd—God be pleased with him! And the Prophet says in the *ḥadīth*: "Paradise has eight gates. Seven of them are closed and one is open for repentance, until the sun rises from it."<sup>17</sup> Al-Suyūṭī cites it in *al-Budūr al-sāfira*.'<sup>18</sup>

He replied—God be pleased with him—by way of giving an interpretation: 'The light of faith is a paradise among the paradises. Indeed, it's the cause of every benefit in the paradises. In fact, it's even the cause of the paradises themselves and the cause of every good and felicity. If repentance is a gate for it, from this point of view it's one of the gates of the paradises. Likewise, the interior of the paradises proceeds from a lower situation to a higher one and this situation is the dirt and wickedness that the body was engaged in. And the interior of repentance is like this. It proceeds from a

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<sup>17</sup> *Budūr: min naḥwihī*.

<sup>18</sup> *Budūr*, p. 503, no. 1744.

lower situation—which is the darkness of sins—to a higher situation—which is the light of repentance and obedience. Thus repentance is one of the gates of Paradise from this point of view.’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘As for its being closed when the sun rises from the place of its setting, this is a figurative way of indicating the removal of the light of truth from the earth and from the people on earth. That removal is the command of God referred to in the *ḥadīth*: “A group from my community will not cease to be aware of the truth until the command of God arrives.”<sup>19</sup> And these are the people of the circle and the number (Dīwān). All those who’ve received their share of that light are the carriers of it and through them it remains on the face of the earth. But if God the Sublime wishes to remove it from the earth, not one of them will remain, and the light will be taken away because there’s no one to carry it. And he said other things but they constitute a secret among God the Sublime’s secrets.’

(337) I, al-Lamaʿī, would add that what he mentioned in the interpretation of the *ḥadīth* is approximately what the shaykh °Abd al-Raʿūf al-Munāwī reports in the *Sharḥ al-Jāmiʿ al-ṣaghīr*<sup>20</sup> from Nāṣir al-Dīn al-Bayḍāwī.<sup>21</sup> He confines himself to him since he agrees with him. And if you compare this with what our Shaykh indicated—God be pleased with him—you’ll find that what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—presents a more sound argument, a clearer meaning and a more lucid interpretation.

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And I asked him—God be pleased with him: ‘Why does Paradise increase through invoking blessings on the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—but not by means of the glorification of God and other formulas for recollecting God.’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘Because the origin of Paradise is the light of the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—and Paradise longs for his light the way a child longs for its father. If Paradise hears mention of him, it becomes invigorated and flies forth to him because Paradise is given to drink from him—God’s blessings and peace be upon him!’ Then he formulated a similitude: ‘A riding animal desires its feed, its fodder and its barley. Barley is brought to it. The animal is as hungry as can be. When it then catches the scent of the barley, it heads toward it. If it’s far from

<sup>19</sup> 25570. *Concordance*, IV, p. 89; cf. also Suyūṭī, *Jāmiʿ al-aḥādīth*, VII, p. 269, no.

<sup>20</sup> Munāwī, *Fayḍ al-qadīr*, VI, p. 395, no. 9770.

<sup>21</sup> Without a specific Qurʾān reference it can’t be found.

it, it pursues the scent without interruption until it reaches it. And the state of the angels that are in the outskirts of Paradise and at its gates is like this. They're occupied with recollecting (*dhikr*) the Prophet and invoking blessings on him—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Paradise longs for this and moves toward them. For their part, the angels are on all sides of Paradise. So Paradise expands in all directions.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'If it weren't for the will of God and His hindering, Paradise would have gone forth into the world during the lifetime of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and accompanied him wherever he went and spent the night where he spent the night. However, God the Sublime stopped Paradise from going forth to him—God's blessings and peace be upon him—so that he'd acquire faith without seeing [the afterlife].'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'When the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and his community (338) enter Paradise, Paradise rejoices in them and expands on their behalf. It experiences incalculable happiness and delight. And when the [other] prophets—blessings and peace be upon them—and their communities enter Paradise, it shrinks in upon itself and becomes constricted. They ask Paradise about this and it replies: "I don't belong to you and you don't belong to me", until the matter is settled by means of their prophets' having received assistance from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him!'

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And concerning their words: 'Invoking blessings (*ṣalāh*) on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is definitely accepted from everyone', I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'There's no doubt that invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is the most excellent of works, and the recollection (*dhikr*) of the angels who are at the extremities of Paradise consists of this.'

And it belongs to the grace (*baraka*) of invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—that whenever they pronounce the invocation, Paradise increases in extent. And they don't slacken in pronouncing it, nor does Paradise slacken in its expansion. They run on and Paradise runs after them and doesn't stop expanding until the said angels apply themselves to glorifying God. But they don't apply themselves to this until the True—He is sublime—manifests Himself to the people of Paradise in Paradise. When He manifests Himself to them and the said angels behold Him, they begin to glorify God, and when they begin to do this,

Paradise comes to a standstill and the halting-stations become fixed for its inhabitants. Had they begun to glorify God when they were created, Paradise wouldn't have increased at all. Thus this belongs to the grace of invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! However, its acceptance is only assured for a pure body and a pure heart because when it comes forth from a pure body, it comes forth devoid of all defects such as hypocrisy and conceit. There are numerous defects indeed, whereas nothing of them is found in the pure body and the pure heart. This is the meaning of what's in the other *hadiths*: "Whoever says: 'There is no god but God' will enter Paradise." This means if his body and his heart are pure, then the one who pronounces the invocation does so in sincerity toward God.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Nevertheless, if you look at the power of the King and the dominance of His wrath—He is sublime—and the fact that the bondsman's heart is between His two fingers and He turns it however He wishes and adorns his bad behavior for him in the direction He turns it toward so that it seems worthier to him than the state he was in—God protect us from this—then you'll realize that the only person who's safe from God the Sublime's deceit (*makr*) is someone who's lost his present world and his hereafter. But God the Sublime knows best!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that what the Shaykh said here—God be pleased with him—about (339) the invocation of blessings on the Prophet being accepted—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is devoid of any doubt. The Friend of God Sayyidī Muḥammad b. Yūsuf al-Sanūsī, being a godly and a beneficent religious scholar—God be pleased with him—was asked about this matter. The person who posed the question told him that he'd heard one of the jurists say: 'Invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—is accepted in every case.'<sup>22</sup> The said shaykh replied to him that Abū Ishāq al-Shātibī—the commentator on the *Shātibīyya*<sup>23</sup>—held a similar view to this. But the shaykh al-Sanūsī—God have mercy on him—regarded this as dubious. For if acceptance were assured for someone who invokes blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—a good final outcome (salvation) would be assured for him. But how can this be, since everyone agrees a person's final outcome is unknown?

<sup>22</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 150, CXXXV; cf. *Ṣuḡhrā* pp. 5 f.; al-Sanūsī died 892/1486.

<sup>23</sup> See p. 265, fn. 84.

Then he gave two answers concerning the difficulty, and in reality these are two rational probabilities, there being no proof for them in the revealed law. Nor are they admissible with regard to the matter of acceptance which can only be recognized on the basis of the revealed law. The first answer is that certainty about the acceptance of an invocation means that if God the Sublime has decreed a good final outcome for the invoker of blessings, he'll find that the good deed of his invocation of blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—has been accepted without a doubt—through God's generosity. This is in contrast to other good deeds by him. For there's no absolute certainty that they'll be accepted, even if the one who performs them dies in the faith.

One can dispute this. The distinction in question is fixed and can only be recognized on the basis of the revealed law. What's necessary is to make an effort in specifying scriptural text from the possessor of the revealed law (Muḥammad). If text can be found, then it's correct. If it can't be found, there's no place in matters of law for rational operations.

The second answer is that the meaning of certainty of an invocation's acceptance is that if it emerges from an invoker by way of love for the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—then it's certain to be accepted and the invoker will profit from it in the hereafter, if only as alleviation of punishment, (340) should God have decreed this for him, and even if the punishment should be for eternity. He compared this with the benefit Abū Lahab received through being given to drink in the *nuqrat al-ibhām*<sup>24</sup> and the alleviation of his punishment on Mondays because he freed the slave woman who announced to him the birth of the Prophet<sup>25</sup>—God's blessings and peace be upon him! And he compared it with the benefit Abū Ṭālib received because of his love for the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—such that he'll be the person who suffers the least torment in the hereafter, and that if it hadn't been for the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he'd be relegated to the lowest depths of Hell. Al-Sanūsī said: 'Now if benefit occurs because of natural love—even if it be for other than God—what then of the believer's love of this chief (the Prophet) and the invocation of blessings upon him? That is to say, the analogy is all the more appropriate.'<sup>26</sup>

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24 The meaning of these words is unclear.

25 No source found regarding this idea.

26 Not found.



And one can dispute this, for there are numerous text passages from the Book and the Sunna that render void the work of an infidel and indicate that faith is a pre-condition for acceptance. Abū Ṭālib and Abū Lahab, according to authoritative text, don't fulfill this pre-condition. So they're excluded from the practice of analogy, and analogies shouldn't be drawn based on them because, as is established in the *uṣūl* [*al-fiqh*], it's a pre-condition affecting the object of comparison that he mustn't have been excluded from the practice of drawing analogies.

When in *al-Durar al-muntathira fī'l-aḥādīth al-mushtahira* the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī—God have mercy on him—discusses the *ḥadīth*: 'The works of my community were presented to me and I found that some of them were accepted and some were rejected, except for the invocation of blessings on me',<sup>27</sup> he says: 'I haven't come upon a chain of transmission for this.' And the author of the *Tamyīz al-ṭayyib min al-khabīth fīmā yadūr 'alā'l-alsina min al-ḥadīth*<sup>28</sup> says: 'As for the *ḥadīth*: "Among all works there are those that are accepted and those that are rejected, except for the invocation of blessings on me. They're [always] accepted and not rejected.", Ibn Ḥajar says: "This is weak (*da'īf*)."' And when the sayyid al-Samanhūdī in his book entitled *al-Ghummāz 'alā'l-lamāz*<sup>29</sup> discusses the *ḥadīth*: 'Among all works there are those that are accepted and those that are rejected, except for the invocation of blessings on me. (341) It's [always] accepted and not rejected.', he comments: 'Ibn Ḥajar says: "This is weak."' And the author of the *Tamyīz* also says: '[As for] the *ḥadīth*: "Invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—isn't rejected", these are the words of Abū Sulaymān al-Dārānī. And in the *Ihyā'* al-Ghazzālī transmits it as going back to the Prophet. Our shaykh said: "This is something I haven't seen but it comes from the saying of Abū'l-Dardā': 'If you make a request of God, begin by invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—because God is more generous than that if you ask Him for two things He would only grant you one of them and refuse the other.'"'—End of citation. And his shaykh whom he refers to was

<sup>27</sup> *Durar*, p. 97, no. 298.

<sup>28</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 150, CXXXVI; the unnamed author is Ibn Dayba<sup>c</sup> who died 944/1537.

<sup>29</sup> 'Ibrīziana', p. 150, CXXXVII; *Ghummāz*, p. 168, no. 195; al-Samanhūdī died after 950/1543; see al-Sakhāwī, *Maqāṣid ḥasana*, p. 322, no. 816; and Meier, *Segenssprechung*, Chapter 50, pp. 219 ff.: 'Der Lohn der *taṣliya*'; as well as the chapters that follow.

Abū'l-Khayr Shams al-Dīn Muḥammad b. ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Sakhāwī—God the Sublime have mercy on him—the author of *al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasana fī bayān kathīr min al-aḥādīth al-dāʾira ʿalā'l-alsina*.

If you've understood this and suchlike, you'll realize that there's no proof of the certainty of acceptance when invoking blessings on the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him! Of course, one may still have high hopes of acceptance, and this more than anything else is the commonly held opinion. But God the Sublime knows best!

.....

And I heard him say about the clothes of the inhabitants of Paradise—God be pleased with him: 'They don't wear out and they aren't thrown away. Moreover, in one moment a person wears a quantity of seventy thousand of them. But if he doesn't throw them away, what's the situation? For they'll weigh him down. The answer is that they're lights, and lights come and lights go [i.e. they're not present all the time].'

And he said—God be pleased with him: 'The body's vision in Paradise doesn't halt at any limit at all (342) because the delights of God in Paradise aren't subject to a limit. So if the body looks at a delight, just by beholding it a person acquires another delight in beholding it, and then a third one and a fourth one. The body experiences delight with every glance due to the diversity of views.'

Then he formulated a similitude—God be pleased with him—based on a big mirror that stands in front of us: 'We feel amazement when we see it because it's very big, so big that a person standing before it sees his whole body in it. Thus our amazement due to it is great.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Then if we see another mirror like it, we aren't amazed. But if we see another mirror that's different from it, once again we're amazed the way we were amazed by the first one. And in Paradise one only sees what's different.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'The Friends of God are in disagreement as to whether if we looked again at the first delight, we'd find it in its first state or not. But God knows best!'

And I heard him say in the midst of his talk—God be pleased with him: 'There are those in Paradise who may experience sadness and affliction.' A certain religious scholar was present. He wished to deny this and said: 'There's no affliction in Paradise.' I replied: 'Drop your denial. I've never heard him say anything—God be pleased with him—that I didn't find stipulated specifically and in general in an authoritative text or in the mention of something

similar. And I've experienced him to be this way for nearly five years.' Then I said to the religious scholar: 'Now what you're denying is stipulated in authoritative text.' And I presented the text. We were about to depart—praise be to God—and I wanted to write down what the Shaykh said—God be pleased with him—and to mention the text. He said to me—God be pleased with him: 'Why did the jurist deny this? In fact, when all the inhabitants of Paradise enter Paradise, the light of praise shines on their tongues and that light is commensurate with their knowledge of their Lord in the House of the world. Then when they enter, they acquire further knowledge of their Lord in accordance with what they knew in the House of the world—more than can be reckoned! They feel remorse in the extreme for their inadequacy with regard to their Lord's rightful claim, and how they served Him and worshipped Him.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Now this is a matter that occurs in the hereafter. And it's the truth without any doubt and disagreement.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'And another question arises that especially concerns the fornicators if they enter Paradise and the True—He is sublime and exalted—manifests Himself to them. When they realize the extent of their baseness and ignorance of their Lord, and they realize the extent of His splendor and greatness, (343) His majesty and wrath, and His overwhelming domination and the breadth of His mercy, they feel remorse because of this and are ashamed to the point of loosing consciousness for a while. Thereupon, those whom God has protected from fornication say to one another: "Verily, our Lord has distinguished us at this time with all His delights." And when those who fell unconscious come to their senses, they obtain an amount of power and perfection of divine knowledge that's beyond description.'

This is what he presented as proof—God be pleased with him—for the general existence of affliction in Paradise.

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that authoritative text has been transmitted for this. The *hāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī—God the Sublime have mercy on him—says in *al-Budūr al-sāfira* in the chapter *Taḥassur ahl al-janna 'alā tark al-dhikr*: 'Al-Ṭabarānī and al-Bayhaqī published with a good chain of transmission from Mu'ādh b. Jabal—God be pleased with him—that the latter reported: "The Apostle of God—God's blessings and peace be upon him—said: 'The only affliction

the inhabitants of Paradise experience is because of the moment they spent without recollecting God.”<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, Aḥmad [Ibn Ḥanbal], al-Tirmidhī, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim published and classified as authentic (*ṣaḥīḥ*) from Abū Ḥurayra—God be pleased with him—that he reported: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said: ‘No group of people sits down somewhere and omits to recollect God and doesn’t invoke blessings on the Prophet—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—without experiencing sorrow on the Day of Resurrection, even if they enter Paradise as a reward.’”<sup>31</sup>

And al-Bayhaqī and Ibn Abī’l-Dunyā published from ‘Ā’isha—God be pleased with her—that she reported: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said: (344) ‘If there’s any moment spent by a human being in which he doesn’t recollect God favorably, he’ll be afflicted for it on the Day of Resurrection.’”—This is what the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī cites in the above-mentioned chapter.

And he says in the chapter *Libās ahl-al-janna* (*The Clothes of the Inhabitants of Paradise*): ‘Al-Ṭayālīsī, al-Nasā’ī, Ibn Ḥibbān and al-Ḥākim published with a sound chain of transmission from Abū Sa’īd al-Khudrī—God be pleased with him—that he reported: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said: ‘Whoever wears silk in the world doesn’t wear silk in the hereafter. If he enters Paradise, the inhabitants of Paradise will wear it but he won’t wear it.’” And al-Suyūṭī says in another passage: “The two Shaykhs [al-Bukhārī and Muslim] published from Ibn ‘Umar—God be pleased with ‘Umar and his son—that he reported: “The Apostle of God—God’s blessings and peace be upon him—said: ‘Whoever drinks wine in the world and doesn’t repent of this, wine is forbidden to him in the hereafter.’”<sup>32</sup>

And there are numerous *ḥadīths* on this subject. But let’s confine ourself to this amount since our purpose is to collect al-Dabbāgh’s words—God be pleased with him and give us benefit through him!

.....

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The believers visualize the delights in their minds and cause them to pass through their hearts, rejoicing in Paradise and in the pleasure that God the Sublime has prepared for them there. As for the Friend of God, his thought is cut off from everything other than God—He is exalted!

<sup>30</sup> *Budūr*, p. 596, no. 2185.

<sup>31</sup> *Concordance V*, p. 435.

<sup>32</sup> *Budūr*, p. 547, no. 1961.

This doesn't mean that his thought is focused on other than Him—He is exalted—and that he then severs his thought from it. But it means that no thought for other than God the Sublime ever was or ever will be created in their minds. That's why they're called the Friends of God, i.e. because of their being cut off from anything other than God the Sublime.'

Now these words of his—God be pleased with him—join one with God and lead one to Him and elevate the bondsman's aspiration (345) so he doesn't occupy himself with delights and forget the One Who's bestowed them on him—He is sublime and exalted! Instead, his duty consists of occupying himself with Him Who bestows delights on him, imploring Him, and standing before Him in supplication and humiliation. This is what the bondsman who's a believer should be engaged in. As for delights, his anticipation of them is only by way of showing love and affection for his Lord and as an acknowledgement that the delights come from Him—He is sublime and exalted! He only looks upon them with such an eye. As for before they occur, he's with his Lord and his Creator so that if we were to imagine these delights were lost or that they didn't exist at all, his heart would remain the same as it was, i.e. focused on its Lord and submerged in the oceans of His oneness and the secrets of His divinity. Neither the existence of delights nor their disappearance distracts him from the Bestower of delights—He is sublime and exalted!

For this reason I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him: 'If the Friend of God attains his desire from the True—He is sublime and exalted—he doesn't pay any attention to where God causes him to alight.' Then he formulated a similitude involving a worm that feels desire in all its veins and bodily parts to consume honey: 'If the worm is placed in a pot of honey and attains its desire, it sets about eating from it night and day. If this pot, along with the honey and the worm contained in it, is then placed inside another bigger pot filled with tar, the worm pays no attention to this. The worm's drink isn't disturbed for it by the tar's odor or by anything else, because its body and its complete being desire the honey and are cut off from everything that's not honey. It has no desire for tar and certainly tar causes it no disturbance. But God knows best!'

## CHAPTER TWELVE

[1] Pp. 914-15. Inhabitants of Hell think they can relieve their torment by eating fruits and leaves that they see. But these things consist of fire and only increase the torment they suffer.

[2] P. 915. The fire of Hell isn't like fire in the world. Its distinctive feature is absolute blackness and sheer darkness.

[3] P. 915. There are rivers in Hell but anyone who drinks from them only suffers increased torment.

[4] Pp. 915-17. Why are there young children in Hell? Any child God knows would have grown up without believing in the Prophet is one of the people of Hell-fire. Story of the youth who at the shrine of Abū Ya'azzā asks to be able to recite the Qur'ān according to all seven canonical forms of recitation. In a vision, he receives a diploma from the saint but he dies shortly thereafter. Al-Lamaṭī explains that he'll be resurrected among the men of piety who've attained this distinction.

[5] P. 917. The angel Mālik is the guardian of Hell. The believer isn't startled by the angel's appearance, knowing he's been created from the secret of the believers' faith. But the infidel almost dies from fear when he beholds the angel.

[6] Pp. 917-18. The weakest infidel in Hell has an amount of space around him equal to ten times the size of the earth. Yet Hell is known for its narrowness because of the torment its inhabitants suffer. The air all around them is filled with torment.

[7] P. 918. The air of Hell consists of pure fire. Running about in Hell is like shaking a burning log. The burning simply increases.

[8] P. 918. In Hell there are houses, castles, gates, trees, walls and rivers but the substance of every one of these objects is pure fire.

[9] Pp. 918-21. When someone does bad actions in the world, castles are built for him in Hell. His good actions cause castles to be built for him in Paradise. The story of the pious woman who's pregnant and suffers at the hands of a false woman. Castles are built for the latter in Hell. Later in life when the pious woman's child has grown up and wants to get married, the false woman gives him something to use as a bride-price. God then removes her castles

from Hell. No one undertakes the slightest action, even in his sleep, without a castle being built for him in Hell or Paradise. Do any actions of infidels fall within the category of ‘permitted (*mubāḥ*)’? The story of a man who feeds a poverty-stricken mother and her daughters as an act of charity. A Friend of God perceives that the man’s castle and delights in Paradise then increase (p. 921). Al-Lamaṭī asks al-Dabbāgh to invoke God against some wicked individuals but al-Dabbāgh replies that they haven’t yet completed building their castles in Hell.

[10] Pp. 921-22. The spirits of some animals will be in Hell as punishment for Hell’s inhabitants, while some will be in Paradise as a delight for its inhabitants. When a man sacrifices an animal with a righteous intention, an angel conducts the animal’s spirit to the man’s castles in Paradise. If a man’s intention is corrupt, the animal’s spirit is conducted to Hell. The animal now consists entirely of fire.

[11] Pp. 922-23. The Jinn in Hell aren’t punished in burning fire but in severe frost (*zamharīr*). Fire is their nature and causes them no harm. Murderers are also punished in a cold fire in Hell. The similitude of a king who locks up disobedient believers in the same fortress as disobedient Jews. This causes great humiliation to the believers.

[12] Pp. 923-24. Who will suffer the severest punishment on the Day of Resurrection? Answer: the person with a perfect body, perfect intelligence and perfect health, and whose means of subsistence have been facilitated, but who then forgets his Creator and undertakes sin without hesitation. Believers must experience dread when it comes to sin.

## (349) CHAPTER TWELVE

On Hell—we beseech God for protection from it—and some of what we heard about it from the Shaykh—God be pleased with him!

[1]

I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The inhabitants of Hell don’t see the trees and rivers that are close to them but they only see what’s far away from them, at a distance equal to the seven

earths and what lies between them. This is so their torment will increase all the more. Thus, at the said distance, they see something in the fire of Hell that has the form of trees with fruit and green leaves. They rush toward them hoping to escape the torment they're in by eating fruit from the trees and drawing close to them. In their haste they traverse the distance in three footsteps or so. They then take hold of the fruit and leaves, and place them in their mouths.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Whatever enters his mouth from Hell and Paradise the bondsman is unable to eliminate the way he eliminates it in the House of the world. So when a leaf or a fruit arrives in their mouth, their previous torment is intensified. They then retrace their steps and traverse the said distance in one and a half footsteps or so, because of the fire that's inside them. But God knows best!'

[2]

And I heard him say about the fire in Hell—God be pleased with him: 'It doesn't appear as bright flame like fire in the world, because eventually the body gets used to fire that ignites in flame and doesn't feel pain from it, and the fire no longer inflicts torment on it. Instead, the characteristic of Hell is sheer darkness. If an amount of fire no bigger than a date were brought forth and its volume were diffused in the air so that it became like smoke, no bright glow and no blaze would appear in it.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Were we to fill the world with fire and then suppose it was compressed and gathered together under great pressure as if it was inside something like a box, it would become absolute blackness and sheer darkness.'

[3]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'In Hell there are rivers and a woman (350) from among the inhabitants of Hell carries her child on her back, heading in the direction of the river and travelling the previously mentioned distance because of the intense thirst that afflicts her. She reaches the river and, foolishly, she and her child drink from it.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is what I heard the Shaykh say—God be pleased with him—about her child. But I didn't ask him whether the child had been born in Hell, indicating that procreation takes place there, or whether it was a child from the world. If it were a child from the world, then as you know:

[4]

Disagreement is current among the religious scholars—God be pleased with them—concerning the children of infidels. In the Traditions from the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon



him—it's reported that when he was questioned about them, he said: 'God knows best what they've done.' And this is what our imam Mālik has chosen—God be pleased with him! Accordingly, whomever God the Sublime knew that if he were to grow up, he'd believe in Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he's one of the people of Paradise. Jābir b. Samura's *ḥadīth* about the Prophet seeing the children of the infidels in Paradise accords with this. And whomever God the Sublime knew that if he were to grow up, he wouldn't believe in Muḥammad—God's blessings and peace be upon him—he's one of the people of Hell-fire. And the *ḥadīth* accords with this as well. Similarly, this is the sense of the story about al-Khaḍir's servant whom al-Khaḍir killed despite his being young.<sup>1</sup> For the religious scholars have said—God be pleased with them: 'Despite his being young, he was imbued with unbelief.' God protect us from such an eventuality!

I asked the Shaykh about this matter—God be pleased with him—and he replied: 'The truth about the matter is what this *ḥadīth* indicates.' And he added—God be pleased with him: 'How many a boy dies at a young age and will be resurrected as one of those who've learned the Book of God by heart—He is mighty and glorious! For God the Sublime knows that if he'd lived, he'd have recited the Book of God. And so he'll be resurrected among those who've learned it by heart. And how many a boy dies young and will then be resurrected among the religious scholars who are knowers of God, etc. For God the Sublime knows that if he'd grown up, he'd have been one of their number.'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would add that a story occurred involving one of our companions. He'd attained the age of puberty and he could recite the Qur'ān according to the tradition of Qālūn<sup>2</sup> or the recitation of Ibn Kathīr.<sup>3</sup> He then went to visit [the shrine of] the upright Friend of God Sayyidī Abū Ya'azzā<sup>4</sup>—God give us profit through him—(351) with the intention [of becoming able] to recite the Qur'ān according to the seven forms of recitation. And his intention in this regard was good and his resolve effective. He set about requesting this from the above-mentioned shaykh and gave great emphasis to his request. He said to him: 'Oh Sayyidī, I've come to you after a three-day journey and my one and only request of you is this. Don't refuse my wish!'

<sup>1</sup> This refers to an episode in Qur'ān 18/60-82; on this subject cf. Francke, *Begegnung*, p. 66; pp. 540 f.; and see here p. 852, fn. 14.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 249, fn. 53.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 211, fn. 26.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 531, fn. 6.

As he was saying this, behold his eyes overwhelmed him and the shaykh Abū Yaʿazzā—God be pleased with him—stood there before him with a written document in the form of a diploma (*ijāza*) that the Seveners<sup>5</sup> write out in the land of Maghrib. It contained the written statements of the religious scholars and experts on Qurʾānic recitation, to the effect that the visitor was one of the Seveners and one of their memorizers of the Qurʾān. The shaykh Abū Yaʿazzā then said to him: ‘Take your diploma! You belong to the memorizers of the Qurʾān who can recite according to the seven forms of recitation.’ When he returned from his visit, he fell ill and died—God have mercy on him! And he hadn’t increased his recitation at all.

His father asked me about the significance and the interpretation of the vision. I answered him with what was just explained above. He was very delighted and the grief he felt disappeared. But God knows best!—Consult the *ḥāfiẓ* Ibn Ḥajar in the *Fath [al-bārī]* in the chapter *Al-janāʿiz* (*Funeral Processions*)<sup>6</sup> and the *ḥāfiẓ* al-Suyūṭī in *al-Budūr al-sāfira* to learn what the *ḥadīth* experts and the religious scholars—God be pleased with them—say concerning the children of the infidels. But God knows best!

[5]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘Everyone who passes by Hell, whether a believer or an infidel, sees Mālik, the guardian of Hell—peace be upon him! However, the believer sees him and knows that he’s been created from the secret of the faith of the believers, and so he isn’t startled by him. As for the infidel, he dies out of fear for him. But God knows best!’

[6]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘The weakest infidel has an amount of space in Hell equal to the earth and then ten times more in extent.’

I asked: ‘So where does its [reputed] narrowness come from?’

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘From the inhabitants’ being surrounded by torment.’

I said: ‘If a man were in a house being beaten night and day, because of knowing there was spaciousness [around him] his soul would find some comfort and he wouldn’t experience the anxiety of someone who’s beaten night and day in a place as narrow as the heel of a lance.’

<sup>5</sup> Cf. editor’s fn., II, p. 351.

<sup>6</sup> *Fath* III, pp. 616 ff.

He replied—God be pleased with him: ‘That’s because the air contains no torment for the man.’

[7]

(352) [Al-Dabbāgh continued:] ‘The air of Hell is pure fire and this person is tormented in it outwardly and inwardly. He rushes about in the fire like a slaughtered chicken. At times he cries out for help and screams. If a believer passed by them and heard their voices when they cry out for help and scream, all his senses would cease. Yet this only increases their distance and their torment, because the fire’s power and its burning increase. At that moment they’re like someone who takes burning logs from a stove and shakes the glowing coals and ashes from them. The flames of the fire increase in the logs. But God knows best!’

[8]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘In Hell there are houses, castles, gates, trees, walls and rivers, just as there are in a city in the world. However, if you took hold of the substance of any of Hell’s parts and the parts of its houses, its castles and other things, you’d find it was pure fire and sheer torment. The houses, castles, trees and rivers are all pure fire. If a substance from it went forth into the House of the world, it would burn up the world in its entirety.’

[9]

He said: ‘The bondsman undertakes actions in the House of the world, and castles are then built for him in Hell. If he repents of these actions or undertakes an upright action that God accepts from him, the castles that were built for him in Hell disappear and castles are built for him in Paradise.’

And he recounted for us—God be pleased with him: ‘A woman from among the believers was pregnant with the Support of the age, and her neighbors were celebrating a wedding. She went to their house to enjoy herself but something valuable was then stolen from the mistress of the bride. The mistress suspected the believing woman of the theft and detained her from returning to her home. Moreover, the latter woman’s husband was a *sharīf* who didn’t even like her to go out the door of the house, much less go to the houses of the neighbors. He had a proud soul and the believing woman was afraid her husband, the *sharīf*, would learn of her going out. And what then of her involvement with theft and her being detained? God alone knows how much she was gripped by fear of her husband. Harm even occurred to the fetus in her womb. Thus castles and houses were built in Hell for the woman who was false. And so the

castles remained built through the period of time that the child was born and grew up, that his mother and his father died, and that he wished to get married. Now the [false] woman gave him something he could use as a bride-price for his wife. God the Sublime then removed her castles from Hell and through His generosity and mercy God—He is mighty and glorious—accepted from her what she'd done for the child in question. Glory be to Him Who possesses this dominion!

(353) And he said—God be pleased with him: 'The bondsman doesn't move his foot, whether stretching it out or drawing it in, without a castle being built for him in Hell or in Paradise. Nor does a vein twitch in his interior while he's asleep without a castle being built for him in Hell or in Paradise. Now this is the case even if the bondsman does these actions unintentionally. So how do you think matters stand when it comes to actions he does intentionally, and that the law prohibits or commands?'

Then I asked: 'How are castles built because of actions that weren't intentional, especially actions by someone who's asleep?'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'What counts for building castles is the state a person returns to when acting intentionally, since this is what causes his castles to be built, whether he's done something intentionally or not. Now the state which an infidel returns to when he acts intentionally is the state of his unbelief and his rebellion against God. This is what counts for building his castles in Hell, no matter in what state his actions came forth from him, i.e. whether they came forth intentionally, unwittingly or while he was asleep. The state that the believer returns to when he acts intentionally is the state of his faith and his love of the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and this is what causes his castles to be built in Paradise, whether his actions have come forth from him intentionally, unwittingly or while asleep. May God place us among the believers and not remove us from their number—amen!'

I, al-Lamaṭī, would note that this is a great and a precious matter concerning which the religious scholars have long disagreed. They argue about whether the infidels fall under the applied rules of the *sharī'a*. And they disagree as to whether this controversy includes permitted (*mubāḥ*) actions of the infidels, for instance concerning food and drink, and such things. One group holds that it does and that there's no category of permitted among the infidels at all because "permittedness (*ibāḥa*)" is a juridical category employed by our Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—since any

legal prescriptions from other than him have been abrogated by his law. Now they don't believe in the Prophet—God's blessings and peace be upon him—and claim that they don't come under his noble law. Thus in their case it necessarily follows that they don't come under the legal category of permitted. This is the view of those among the religious scholars who've seriously studied the matter, such as Taqī al-Dīn al-Subkī,<sup>7</sup> and he's the one whose correctness appears clear to us. Thus the actions of the infidels—God curse them—are in their entirety sins and misdeeds. And the words of the Shaykh accord with this—God be pleased with him!

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: 'If you look at Hell or Paradise and you look at the castles and the gardens of their inhabitants, you'll find that the bondsmen's actions in the world are connected with those (354) punishments or delights that occur in the hereafter.'

Then he told me a story about this—God be pleased with him! He said: 'A certain [Friend of God] looked at a castle in Paradise of one of the believers who was still alive and he saw delights in it that were set in motion for increase and about to change from one state to another.'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Like a grape when juice and sweetness are about to occur in it.' [He continued:] 'Then he looked at the believer whose castle it was and he saw him in his shop selling clothes. Now the believer's mind was set in motion and he was aroused. He suddenly stood up, closed his shop and set out for his house. He told his wife: "Today is a day for charitable gifts. Our neighbors don't have anything."'

He said—God be pleased with him: 'There was a woman among his neighbors who had daughters, and they were poor folks. Their mother ordered them to work hard spinning so they'd finish early in the day and she could sell something to buy them food. That way their needs would be concealed from people. And so the neighbor said to his wife: "Prepare food for us and for our female neighbor." The wife set to work and the man ordered her to be quick, to prepare the food with skill and to make a lot of it. He then took two bowls, went out to the market and filled the bowls with *laban*. When the wife finished making the food, he divided it into two halves. One half he took for himself and the other half he placed in a container and a waterskin. He carried this himself and carried one of the bowls to his neighbors. The daughters were working hard spinning and

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<sup>7</sup> See p. 506.

they were hungry. They were startled when the man with the food knocked at their door. He said: "I realized that you haven't had any income today and that today is a day of charitable gifts. This is a sufficient amount of food for you. Take it and take this *laban*." They were greatly delighted by this and he departed. They ate and for the man's sake they beseeched God to accept [his good deed].

The Friend of God looked at the delights that had been set in motion for increase and found that they'd now increased and changed to a state beyond qualification and description. This is how the matter turned out, though it was hidden from the man who gave away the food. The Lord—He is sublime and exalted—moves His bondsmen to do what they end up doing. But God knows best!

And one day I asked him about a tyrannical man whose oppression and arrogance had become very harsh. The people hated him and completely dissociated themselves from him. I said to al-Dabbāgh: 'Invoke God against him!'

He replied—God be pleased with him: 'Up to now his castles in Hell haven't been completed. There are still many castles [to be built] for him and he won't die until he's completed them.' The Shaykh has passed away—God be pleased with him—whereas even now that man is still alive. We beseech God for protection from him! But God knows best!

And I asked him—(355) God be pleased with him—about someone from among the people of wickedness and oppression. He'd stepped down from his post and the people greatly rejoiced at this. And I discussed the matter with al-Dabbāgh.

He said—God be pleased with him: 'Alas, oh Sayyidī! Up till now So-and-so hasn't completed his quota.' Then the man returned to his post and went back to being the way he'd been. He's still alive at the present time, which is the last day of Ramaḍān in the year 1136/22 June 1724. But God knows best!

[10]

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—about the spirits of animals that aren't subject to reward or punishment: 'Some of them are in Hell as punishment for the inhabitants of Hell, and some are in Paradise as a delight for the inhabitants of Paradise. The spirits of dogs, lions and wolves, and whichever of these animals are repulsive, are in Hell if they were with the infidels in the world. Otherwise, they aren't in Hell. But God knows best!'

And on the day of the Great Feast<sup>8</sup> I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘On this day the angels descend to receive the spirits of the sacrificial animals. Above every village or city or locality where a sacrifice takes place on the feast day, noble angels are seen. They hover in the air and don’t descend to the earth, except on this day. If a sacrificial animal is slaughtered, they take its spirit and depart either for Paradise or for Hell. If the person sacrificing has a righteous intention in offering up a sacrifice and his only reason for this is the face of God and he isn’t motivated by pride, arrogance, hypocrisy and conceit, the angels take the spirit of his sacrificial animal and conduct it to his castles in Paradise. It comes to be one of his delights in Paradise. But if the intention of the person sacrificing is the opposite of this, in that his intention is corrupt and his action is for other than God—He is mighty and glorious—the angels take the spirit of his sacrificial animal and conduct it to Hell and it becomes one of the punishments prepared for him in Hell. If you look at the spirit in question, you see a ram with its body and its familiar form, with its horns and its wool, yet all of it consists of burning fire. All the hairs of its wool are fire, its horns are fire, and its body is all fire. We beseech God for protection from this!’

He said to me—God be pleased with him: ‘Relate these words to the people, for they have great need of them.’ And I related them to a group of people. God give us and them and all the Muslims success with having an upright intention! But God knows best!

[11]

(356) And I heard him say—God be pleased with him: ‘A Jinnee in Hell isn’t punished in burning fire because fire is his nature and causes him no harm. Instead, he’s punished in severe frost (*zamharīr*) and cold. And in the world the Jinn have a great fear of the cold. During the summertime you see them in the air being fearful that a cold breeze will blow. If it does blow, they run off the way wild onagers take flight. As for water, the Jinn and the satans never enter it. If it’s been preordained that one of them enter water, he’s extinguished and dissolves, the way one of us dissolves if he enters fire. But God knows best!’

He said—God be pleased with him: ‘If it isn’t clear to you what the bodies of the Jinn are like, look at a very dark fire with great amounts of smoke such as occurs among potters, and in it picture

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<sup>8</sup> The Feast of the Immolation on the 10th of Dhū’l-Ḥijja which concludes the rites of the pilgrimage to Mecca.

their forms according to which they were created. If you then imagine a form in that smoke and you dress it in the smoke, that's the way a Jinnee is. But God knows best!<sup>9</sup>

And I heard him say—God be pleased with him—about the punishment of murderers: 'Their punishment isn't like that of the inhabitants of Hell.'

I asked: 'How's that?' He explained this with a similitude—God be pleased with him! He said: 'Let's suppose a king who has halls in which are Jews and believers. And he has two fortresses, in one of which he confines the Jews and in the other he confines the believers. Then if one of the believers disobeys him, he encloses him in the fortress of the Jews, and we know that he causes him great humiliation by joining him in the same fortress with the Jews.'

Then I said: 'Explain this for us.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'In Hell there's a burning fire and the offspring of Adam are punished with it. There's also a cold fire and the satans<sup>10</sup> are punished with it, as was just mentioned. Murderers are punished with this fire along with the satans.' He said—God be pleased with him: 'Nor is this the case only with murderers but certain other sinners suffer the same.' Then just as he was about to specify who these are and the wisdom behind punishing them with the cold fire, someone arrived who interrupted his speech. But God knows best!

[12]

One time he said to me: 'Do you know who will experience the severest punishment on the Day (357) of Resurrection?'<sup>11</sup> I asked: 'Who will that be?' He replied—God be pleased with him: 'A bondsman whom God has given a perfect body, perfect intelligence and perfect health and for whom He's facilitated life and the means of subsistence but then this man goes on for one or two days, or even longer, without thinking of his Creator—He is sublime and exalted! And when sin is possible for him, he undertakes it with his complete body and his complete intelligence, and he finds it pleasurable and delights in it without any thought causing him anxiety with regard to his Lord—He is sublime! You'll find he's extremely attached to sin and completely cut off from his Lord. In his entirety and his very essence he's inclined to sin and he experiences the greatest sweetness in it. His punishment for this is that on the Day of Resurrection he'll be consigned to torment with his whole being and he'll be given over to it completely and fall into it all at once.'

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 392 f.

<sup>10</sup> The satans are the same as the [bad] Jinn.

<sup>11</sup> See pp. 540 f.



He said—God be pleased with him: ‘Heedlessness toward the Creator—He is sublime and exalted—especially while one is in a state of sin, is an awesome matter and a momentous affair. The believer, if he commits a sin, must be aware that he has a Master Who exercises power over him. He must experience fear and dread, and in this way the punishment’s intensity will be extenuated, if the punishment isn’t totally eliminated. But God knows best!’

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This is the end of what the author, the distinguished jurist, erudite theologian and learned scholar, Sayyidī Shaykh Abū’l-°Abbās Aḥmad b. Mubārak al-Sijilmāsī al-Lamaṭī wrote down—God the Sublime have mercy on him—of what he heard from his shaykh, our lord and master, the Support of the age, Sayyidī °Abd al-°Azīz b. Mawlānā Mas°ūd al-Dabbāgh al-Idrīsī al-Ḥasanī—God be pleased with him and give him satisfaction, and God grant us benefit (358) through his sciences! Amen, oh Lord of the worlds! And God’s blessings and peace be upon our lord Muḥammad, and upon his family and his Companions! God is our sufficiency and the best of protectors! There’s no strength and no power save in God the Supreme, the Majestic!

## APPENDIX

### INTRODUCTION

1 *walī*: A *walī* (pl. *awliyāʾ*) is a Friend of God, i.e. a saintly person who may be alive or dead. Such a person is divinely chosen and stands in a special, close relation to God. As a member of one of the highest-ranking categories of human being, he possesses a wide variety of miraculous powers and can confer all manner of material benefits and spiritual blessings. In the *Ibrīz* al-Dabbāgh displays numerous traditional characteristics of the Friend of God, as well as some less familiar ones that involve his supernatural insights into the religious sciences, and this despite the fact that he's had no formal theological training in a *madrasa*. Cf. EI XI, pp. 109-25, in particular pp. 109-12.

2 *sharīf*: The general term applied to someone who's considered to be a descendant of the Prophet Muḥammad. Over time this class of people became numerous and even in the case where they were materially poor, they might enjoy some degree of social standing and pious respect. Cf. EI IX, pp. 329-37, especially pp. 330 ff.

3 The continuation of al-Dabbāgh's genealogy:...b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. °Abd al-Raḥmān b. Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Aḥmad b. Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm b. °Umar b. °Abd al-Raḥīm b. °Abd al-°Azīz b. Hārūn b. Qanūn b. °Allūsh b. Mandīl b. °Alī b. °Abd al-Raḥmān b. °Īsā b. Aḥmad b. Muḥammad b. °Īsā b. Idrīs b. Idrīs b. °Abd Allāh al-Kāmil b. al-Ḥasan al-Muthannā b. al-Ḥasan al-Sibṭ b. °Alī [b. Abī Ṭālib].

4 *ma°ārif* (sing. *ma°rifa*): lived, interiorized knowledge or insight which in the domain of mysticism frequently, though not always, stands in contrast or at least as a counterweight to °ilm, theological, rationally grasped knowledge. One may translate *ma°rifa* as 'higher knowledge' or 'divine insight', the content of which, in this particular context, concerns the angels. Cf. EI VI, pp. 569 f.

10 *dhikr*: recollecting God. Recollection is achieved through repeated recitation of certain *dhikr*-formulas which consist of God's names. The recitation can adopt various rhythms and breathing techniques. This is meant to induce visionary experiences among the participants. Different Sufi orders are distinguished by their particular *dhikr*-formulas and manner of recitation. In early Islam little attention was given to techniques of recitation, but emphasis was on mental recollection. EI II, pp. 223-27; Gramlich, *Derwischorden* II, pp. 370-407.

17 *sirr*: in the *Ibrīz* *sirr* has numerous meanings and shades of meaning. It may signify loosely any secret. By extension it may refer to a mystery in the physical world such as why a spring gushes forth in a particular place or fruit trees burgeon in the spring. And then it may be a hidden reason behind a Qur'ānic verse or a *ḥadīth*. More importantly, however, along with *dhāt*, *rūḥ* and *nafs*, the *sirr* is a key concept in the anthropology of the *Ibrīz*. Ultimately, its exact meaning remains elusive. Its usage as a term in the systems of Eastern Sufism is clearer. There it signifies the highest spiritual component in a person's make-up, which ranks above the *qalb* and the *rūḥ* (cf. Meier, *Kubrā*, p. 174; Gramlich, *Derwischorden* II, pp. 81-83). In the *Ibrīz* it obviously refers to something else—certainly most of the time. It isn't conceived of as a component in a person's make-up but rather as a kind of magic power that can be compared with the supernatural *himma* that some mystics possess (cf. Meier, *Kubrā*, pp. 224 ff.). The *sirr* in this sense, as amply illustrated throughout the *Ibrīz*, is the possession of an exceptional individual who's received illumination (*al-maḥfūḥ* 'alayhi). Furthermore, he can transmit it as an inheritance to a suitably prepared person. On the other hand, should the *sirr* be conferred on someone who's too weak to support it, this will have a disastrous effect on him.

90 *Dhāt* and *rūḥ* are two other key concepts in the *Ibrīz*. *Dhāt* is a human being as he can be perceived by the senses, man as a unit compounded of body, soul and spirit (among hundreds of references see here Index of Subjects). Very often, however, *dhāt* signifies man as a physical body, and in such cases may even be specifically described as *dhāt turābiyya* (see Index of Subjects). In the *Ibrīz* there are no cases of *dhāt* signifying a person's higher spiritual essence, that is to say the spiritual or divine kernel of his being. Fritz Meier has drawn attention to this distinction in

his article 'Eine auferstehung Mohammeds bei Suyūṭī', *Bausteine*, II, pp. 797 ff./*Essays*, 'A Resurrection of Muḥammad in Suyūṭī', pp. 505 ff. The *dhāt* is formed by the blood which flows through three hundred and sixty-six veins. In the veins man's lower sensual characteristics live out their life, their source being the *nafs*, the concupiscent soul. But the *nafs* doesn't have as prominent a role in the *Ibrīz* as it does in the thought of many other mystics, the same being true of *hawā*, the passionate drive. The enlightened mystic is able to perceive the sea of inner drives and passions as a blazing fire.

From a cosmological point of view, the *dhāt* belongs to the dark part of the world, the *ḡalām*. In a normal person it's separated by a *ḥijāb*, a partition, from the higher part of his being, the *rūḥ*. In the cosmological scheme the *rūḥ* belongs to the world of light, *nūr*—or to be more precise, it originates in the world of the angels, *al-mala' al-a'lā*. That's why, like an angel, the *rūḥ* has the capacity to see God directly (*mushāhada*), and possesses the higher human capacities of knowledge and reason, *ʿilm* and *ʿaql*. After death the *rūḥ* leaves the *dhāt* and then resides in Barzakh until the Final Judgement. The Prophet Muḥammad is also made up of *dhāt* and *rūḥ*—to turn now to a second complex of basic ideas, al-Dabbāgh's Muḥammadology. In the case of the Prophet, however, these two entities are of a special kind and have a different relationship to one another than in a normal human being. The *dhāt* of the Prophet is *ṭāhira*, *sharīfa*, *kāmila*. While still in the world, it's endowed with the physical qualities which the inhabitants of Paradise will enjoy, that is to say it's an imperishable body made up of light, though it too originated from dust. The Prophet has no partition between his *dhāt* and *rūḥ*; the two are joined together. The *rūḥ* lives within the Prophet's *dhāt* the way love lives within a human being's soul, that is to say it completely permeates the *dhāt*. Consequently, the Prophet's *dhāt* possesses a special power; it draws upward to God and not, as is usual, downward to the earth and darkness.

Due to the special power of light which is active in his *dhāt*, the Prophet is the intermediary between creation and God. On the one hand, the divine lights pour down on the Prophet's *dhāt* uninterruptedly, while on the other hand his *dhāt* transmits the divine lights to God's creatures, for example in the form of the Qur'ān. (Cf. 'Ibrīziana', pp. 119 f.).

## CHAPTER TWO

31 Whereas al-Lamaṭī often cites sources for his views, here none are given, nor does this seem odd in the context. But we would like to have been told more about these other scholars who were supposedly in disagreement concerning how to vocalize the word.—One could speculate that *al-man* comes from Arabic *mann*, *minna*, etc. As for *ḥamannā*, might it be connected with or a distortion of the Syriac *ḥēnāna* (mercy, compassion)? The long *ā* at the end is noteworthy, since it corresponds to the article in Syriac.—In fact, *al-manḥamannā* is mentioned in Arabic literature as a name of Muḥammad, indeed, in the *Sīra* of Ibn Hishām (*Sīra* I, p. 248) where it's translated as *al-baraqalīṭus*. Ibn Hishām here gives an Arabic paraphrase of John 15:26-27. However, in the Syriac text of the Bible one doesn't find *manḥamannā* but, following the Greek original, *paraqlītā*.—Cf. Alfred Guillaume's article 'The Version of the Gospels Used in Medina circa 700 A.D.' Guillaume clears up the matter convincingly. He establishes that our *manḥamannā* is to be read as the Syriac *m<sup>e</sup>naḥḥemānā* which must go back to a Syriac version that differs from the Peschitta. In the Palestinian-Syriac lectionary one also finds in John 15:26 the form *m<sup>e</sup>naḥḥemānā* for the Paraclete.—Of course, the fantasies of al-Lamaṭī and al-Dabbāgh have nothing to do with this.

33 The great illumination (*al-faṭḥ al-kabīr*): the goal of the mystic path is *faṭḥ*, illumination. It can only be attained through a shaykh and under his guidance because—as other mystics affirm as well—the path leads from the shaykh by way of the Prophet unto God.—In the *Ibrīz* little is said about the preconditions for *faṭḥ*, or about travelling the path, asceticism, disciplining the carnal soul, etc. These matters are taken for granted. Illumination, which one normally only attains after the death of one's shaykh, is of two kinds: the normal *faṭḥ* and the great, all-embracing *al-faṭḥ al-kabīr*. The first stage consists of the novice descending into his interior, into the dark regions of his veins which are the carriers of his lower character traits, with the intention of bringing about their purification. If he's successful, he reaches the first stage of illumination, that is to say the secrets of the material cosmos reveal themselves (*futiḥa*) to him. His sense organs become capable of penetrating the whole of the physically perceptible cosmos. Since this cosmos, i.e. the earth worlds and

the worlds of the spheres, belong to the realm of darkness (*ḡalām*), this is a question of a *fath ḡulmānī*, an illumination which infidels as well can attain and which doesn't yet provide one with certainty of knowledge. The spiritual cosmos, on the other hand, only reveals itself to the believing Muslim. In the second stage of illumination he beholds the angels, the prophets, the spirits of the Friends of God, Paradise, Hell and Barzakh. This then is *al-fath al-kabīr*, the great illumination. But even now errors are still possible. For example, spiritual contact with Jesus that's made possible through illumination can cause someone to renounce Islam and become a Christian.

Certainty and full illumination only become established once the mystic has traversed all the material and spiritual worlds, and is honored with *ru'yat al-nabī yaqẓatan/mushāḡadat al-dhāt al-sharīfa*. After this ultimate experience, he becomes omniscient and is permanently protected (*maḡfūẓ*). He stands far above everyone else in knowledge, in particular above the theologians and the *fuqahā*<sup>3</sup>. He now embodies the true, infallible source for interpreting the law.

Considered in terms of anthropology, *fath* means that the partition wall between *dhāt* and *rūḡ* has been removed. The person who's received illumination immediately attains a state which resembles that of the Prophet.—See especially 'Der *Ibrīẓ*', p. 330, and 'Ibrīẓiana', pp. 123-25.

34 Al-Lamatī devotes an entire chapter to the *Dīwān al-ṡāliḡīn*, the Council of the godly (Chpt. Four). There he says: 'The language of the people of the *Dīwān*...is Syriac because of its conciseness and its combining numerous meanings, and also because the spirits and the angels attend the *Dīwān* and Syriac is their language. They only speak Arabic if the Prophet...is present out of politeness toward him.' (II, p. 26, ll. 17-20).

35 *ḡalām*: is a key concept in the *Ibrīẓ* which is dealt with in its own chapter (Chpt. Three), as well as in Chpt. Nine; see also 'Der *Ibrīẓ*', pp. 328, 330. The *dhāt* belongs to the world of *ḡalām*, whereas the *rūḡ* belongs to the world of light.

37 It may be convenient at this point to review what's been said up to now about language and add some comments.

God teaches Adam to speak a language in Paradise. The language in question is Syriac (*suryāniyya*). It consists of letters

which in each case carry meanings (*ma<sup>c</sup>ānī*) within themselves. The meanings don't depend on words that are made up of several letters. How man comes to possess the meanings (*ma<sup>c</sup>ānī*) isn't explained. However, they must be connected with the *rūḥ*, the spiritual element in man's make-up, since the language of the spirits and the angels is also Syriac. Adam then brought Syriac down to earth with him as his language and the language of his children. In the course of time, this original language developed into the other known languages. Meanwhile, the 'meanings' associated with the individual letters gradually fell into oblivion so that it then became necessary to express meanings with several letters at a time. The first of these derived languages was Indian. Moreover, one may conclude that Arabic is also a derivative of Syriac. Those who know Syriac, besides the angels and the spirits, are the Friends of God who've received illumination, as well as all the members of the Council of the godly (*Dīwān al-ṣāliḥīn*).

°Abd al-°Azīz al-Dabbāgh is repeatedly described by his disciple al-Lamaṭī as an *ummī*, which isn't to be understood as signifying 'illiterate' since al-Dabbāgh clearly knew how to read and write. Al-Lamaṭī means that al-Dabbāgh hadn't received a formal theological training such as one acquires in a *madrasa*. Having attained the great illumination, al-Dabbāgh possesses all the knowledge it's possible for a human being to possess about the world and the afterlife. He's actually the highest living spiritual authority of his day and age, i.e. the Support (*ghawth*).

Thus, it's no wonder that his pronouncements touch on language and individual languages, all of which has been eagerly discussed in Islamic theology and philosophy. Some recent noteworthy works that investigate this area are: ThG IV, pp. 323-25 and 615-17; Loucel, 'L'origine du langage d'après les grammairiens arabes'; Weiss, 'Medieval Muslim Discussions of the Origin of Language'; Endress, 'Grammatik und Logik'; Versteegh, *Greek Elements in Arabic Linguistic Thinking*; and Gimaret, *Les noms divins en Islam*.

And for more on the subject, see Schöck, *Adam*, pp. 194 ff.

The most pertinent for our purposes is Weiss' article in which he lays out six positions that recur in Islamic theological discussion. Two of these positions are relevant here:

No. 2 he calls: 'The "conventionalist" theory, i.e. the theory that language is a social convention (*iṣṭilāḥ*), the product of a cooperative "naming" of things, the choice of names being

basically arbitrary.’—It may also be noted that the term *muwāḍa‘a* is here used as a synonym for *iṣṭilāḥ*.

And no. 3 entails: ‘The “revelationist” theory, i.e. the theory that language was revealed to man by God, God not man being therefore the “namer” of things.’—In this connection the terms *ilhām* and *tawqīf* are employed.

It remains unclear which of these positions al-Lamaṭī and al-Dabbāgh adhere to, since, in this immediate context at least, the buzz words *iṣṭilāḥ*, *muwāḍa‘a*, *ilhām* and *tawqīf* don’t appear. However, language in their view clearly didn’t first emerge on earth. Syriac was already Adam’s language in Paradise and, when it comes to this language, the ‘revelationist theory’ naturally applies: God taught Adam Syriac. The paradisiac character of the language is lost on earth and Syriac then develops into the other non-paradisiac languages through a process of conventionally agreed upon usage (*wad‘*).

As it appears, we’re dealing with an amalgamation of both theories, an amalgamation that accepts tradition but reworks it independently, almost ‘obstinately’.

On the other hand, as others would have it Adam’s language in Paradise was Arabic and when he came down to earth, he brought it with him. When he was disobedient to God, which took place on earth, Arabic was taken away from him and he spoke Syriac. After his repentance, he was once again allowed to speak Arabic (al-Suyūṭī, *Muzhir* I, p. 30, from Ibn ‘Asākir, *Ta’rīkh Dimashq*).—Or according to a different view, Arabic, which Adam brought down to earth with him, was deformed (*hurriḥa*) in the course of time and became Syriac (al-Suyūṭī, *ibid.*)—i.e. the opposite of what al-Lamaṭī maintains. And according to still another view (*ibid.* I, p. 33), Ismā‘īl received Arabic by way of *ilhām*.—Al-Būnī (*Shams al-ma‘ārif*, p. 304) maintains that the *abjad* alphabet was revealed (*nazalat*) to Adam, Idrīs, Noah, Moses and Jesus.

As for Idrīs, in the *Qīṣaṣ al-anbiyā’* one finds that he was the first person to make use of a quill pen for writing (e.g. al-Tha‘labī, *Qīṣaṣ*, p. 60).

63 The *bāṭin* of the Qur’ān: on this subject in general see EQ II, pp. 118-20; Elran, s.v. *bāṭen*. In al-Dabbāgh’s view, the capacity for a *bāṭin* interpretation depends on knowledge of the inner sense of the individual *letters* and not, as in Classical Sufism, on the inner sense of the words or sentences which are



decoded by the method of *istinbāṭ* (cf. Nwyia, *Exégèse*, p. 67; on *istinbāṭ* see Meier, 'Handschriftenfund', pp. 103 f./*Essays*, 'An Important Manuscript Find', p. 184.)

67 Al-Tirmidhī's text is quoted by Abū Zayd al-Fāsī in the *Sharḥ Hizb al-barr* (= *al-Hizb al-kabīr*), pp. 73 f.—On ʿAbd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad al-Fāsī (d. 1070/1660) see Kaḥḥāla, *Muʿjam* V, p. 172; GAL, S II, p. 360. This particular commentary isn't found in Kaḥḥāla or in GAL.—Al-Ḥakīm al-Tirmidhī: died *circa* 300/910; cf. Radtke, *Ḥakīm Tirmidī*, p. 38.—We were unable to find the quoted passage in the *Nawādir al-uṣūl*. The text is also cited by Nwyia, *Exégèse*, pp. 167 f., being taken from Massignon, *Passion*.—On al-Shādhilī (d. 656/1258) and *al-Hizb al-kabīr* cf. EI, IX, pp. 170 f.

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